



Gertrude Coleman
from Aunt-Lill
87

CANDALARIA.

1861





“ ‘ I will come back in about an hour, Carrie.’ ”—*Page 63.*

CANDALARIA :

A HEROINE OF THE WILD WEST.

BY

J. A. OWEN,

AUTHOR OF "OUR HONOLULU BOYS," "UNDER PALM AND PINE,"
"SEA BLOSSOM," ETC.

WITH EIGHT ILLUSTRATIONS BY ALFRED JOHNSON.

London :

HODDER AND STOUGHTON,
27, PATERNOSTER ROW.

MDCCCLXXXVII.

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BUTLER & TANNER,
THE SELWOOD PRINTING WORKS,
FROME, AND LONDON.

The figure consists of two parts. The top part shows a single hexagon with vertices labeled *a* through *f*. The bottom part shows a larger section of the lattice with vertices labeled *a* through *z*. The labels are arranged in a hexagonal pattern, with *a* at the top left and *z* at the bottom right.

Dedication.

I WISH TO DEDICATE
THIS STORY OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS,
WHICH IS FOUNDED ON FACT, TO THE HAPPY MEMORY OF
MY DEAR MOTHER,
AT WHOSE SIDE MOST OF IT WAS WRITTEN,
AND TO WHOSE BRIGHT AND LOVING INFLUENCE
WHAT IS BEST IN IT IS DUE.

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CHAPTER I.

A MOTHERLESS LAMB.

CHAPTER I.

A MOTHERLESS LAMB.

“**E**LEANOR!” said Stephen Warner one evening to his young wife, “I saw something on my rounds to-day which vexed me terribly, and I cannot get it out of my mind.”

“What was it, Steeve?”

“I was riding past those wretched Mexican huts on the other side the river, and when I got to the last of them, which is some little distance from the rest, I saw what seemed to me at first a shapeless bundle, hanging half-way up the side of the hut. Most piteous sounds were coming from it. Feeling curious to see what it could be, I went nearer, and found it was actually a child about two years old. It was slung up by a rope fastened to the poor little creature’s body with a band ; the other end of the rope, which went over the roof, was tied to a tree so as to suspend the child a few feet above the ground,

out of the reach of dogs and other animals. It looked such a pitiful, helpless little object hanging there ; and it was crying terribly, probably from hunger. No one was to be seen about the place, and I could do nothing for it, as I had to ride on to the stockyard to see that the herd of cattle I bought last were in order for starting east to-morrow. I came back by Argenta Creek, and the child is perhaps out of its misery by this ; but I cannot get it out of my mind. What do you say to having the span put to the ambulance, and going over the river with me ?”

“To-night, Stephen ?”

“Yes ; why not ? The moon will be up soon. You have not been out to-day ; the drive would rouse and do you good.”

“I shall never feel roused in this awfully dull place, Stephen ; it seems hotter and more wretched than ever.”

“You know I cannot leave it for a year or two, Nell. Perhaps I made a mistake in asking you to marry me, after taking up these army contracts ; but it is done now, Nell, and you must try to endure this life a little longer, until I can see my way to going into civilized parts again.”

Nell made no answer. She did not go up to her

husband, as many women would have done, and show him she was sorry to have appeared impatient and dissatisfied—that she loved him, and would put up with want of society and a rough frontier life for his sake : she began to play with the large fan she held, and said nothing.

Stephen felt hurt.

“Strange that she cannot enter into my interests !” he thought to himself. “If she only had a child, perhaps she would be happier and more contented.”

Presently he made an effort to overcome his annoyance, and said, in a kind but firm tone,—

“I mean to go, Nell ; say, will you come with me or no ?”

“I suppose I must, Stephen ; I have been quite long enough alone to-day”

“That’s right, wife,” he said cheerily. “Get your wraps—the evening is cool ; and, Nell, can you not put up some biscuits and a bottle of milk ? Who knows but the miserable little thing may be hanging there, hungry, still.”

Mrs. Warner was apathetic, and had grown selfish. She had been somewhat spoilt, too, by the flattery of the officers who were stationed at Fort Marshall, on the Arkansas, in Southern Colorado, where she and

Stephen had made their home ; but she was not exactly hard-hearted, if managed with tact, and, seeing that her husband was determined to have his way, she put up what he suggested, got ready, and the pair were soon on their way to the Mexican village across the river.

"I declare, Nell, it hangs there still!" cried Stephen.

He jumped down from the ambulance, quickly untied the rope, and lowered the small bundle of suffering humanity.

It was a sight to make a woman's heart bleed, and even Eleanor Warner could not turn away from it without doing what she could to relieve the poor infant.

It had only a few rags wrapped about its body, which was thin and wasted. Evidently its mother had no love for it, if, indeed, it had a mother. It would have been kinder to the babe to have thrown it into the Arkansas as soon as it was born, than to have let it live to be treated thus. It was Stephen, however, and not Eleanor, who took it in his arms, not minding its dirt and its rags, and tried to quiet the poor babe, which was now frightened at the strange faces, and cried louder than ever. Eleanor

got the biscuits and milk, and whilst the two were busy soothing and feeding the child, the mother returned. She seemed perfectly indifferent to their remonstrances, and greedily partook of the food. Stephen tried to make her promise not to treat the child so any more ; but on the two following days, having to pass that way, he again found it hanging there alone.

“I really cannot stand this, Nell,” he said ; “the child will be injured for life, besides the misery it must be enduring. Suppose we offer to adopt the poor little mortal ; the mother has evidently no love for it ?”

“Oh no, Steeve ; I do beg you will not think of doing that.”

“But you complain of being lonely, Nell ; and the care of the child would amuse you, perhaps.”

“Amuse me ! the dirty little child of a low Mexican woman !”

“Have you no compassion, Nell ?”

“Get some one to compel the woman to treat the child differently, Steeve.”

The woman was hard as a stone, however. She was poor, too, and said she was obliged to go out to work without the child, and there was no one with

whom she could leave it. It was safe enough hanging up there, she considered.

At last Stephen persuaded his wife to have the little girl. When the cunning and greedy mother saw what his intention was, she said he must give her money for it.

Again Mrs. Warner remonstrated with her husband ; but he was now determined to have his way ; arranged to give the mother fifty dollars as the price of her child, and brought it home, almost triumphantly, one evening in front of his saddle.

"You would not be so cheerful if you were going to have the charge of it yourself," said the wife impatiently, as he handed it down to her.

Poor little mortal ! It looked most unattractive, certainly. Except for the bright, large dark eyes, its face was very plain ; but these had a most pathetic and appealing expression, as though trying to propitiate the heart of the woman to whom it now belonged by reason of purchase. Even Eleanor, who was not naturally fond of children, however pretty, felt a little touched, and carried it into the house without any more complaints.

It ought to have been able to walk, for it proved to be full three years old ; but the army surgeon,

who came to inspect it, said that the cruel way in which it had been treated had weakened the child's spine, and it would require much care and good nursing to make a strong girl of the neglected and ill-used baby.

"A pretty burden you have imposed on us both, Steeve!" said Mrs. Warner.

Stephen was not often given to quoting Scripture, but his only answer just now was, "'Take this child, and nurse it for me; and I will give thee thy wages.'"

When they asked the mother what the name of her child was, she said, "Candalaria."

"What a name!" cried Nell. "It might as well be Candelabra."

"I don't dislike it," said Stephen; "but give it any name you like."

The wife was too indifferent to fix on any other, however, so Candalaria it remained—a most imposing and high-sounding name for so puny and forlorn a little object.

Happily for the health of the child, Eleanor was a particularly orderly woman, who could bear nothing that was not proper and clean near her, so that it was washed and tended well; and in the course of a few months, by dint of much bathing, nourishing food,

and lying quietly on a padded little board inside a hammock under the trees in the open air, Candalaria began to look quite a different child, and was soon able to use her feet a little. Eleanor seemed unable to love her, although she took good care of her, and by degrees got accustomed to what, at first, had been only a trouble and burden.

The little girl soon found out who was the most kind to her, and as soon as she was able to run about well, would follow Stephen round the house and yard like a little dog, or sit at his feet watching him with her large dark eyes so fondly, that he grew quite to love the child he had rescued from pain and misery, and often vexed his wife by playing with her too much.

This might have caused much irritation if a son had not come to fill Eleanor's heart and arms when Candalaria was five years old. By-and-by a second made its appearance, and, after two more years, a third. When the last boy was born, the girl was ten years of age, and quite a little woman in many of her ways. The weak bent back had grown straight and strong, and her dark hair long and thick. If Stephen had spoiled her at first, no one else ever did so, and she soon became a good and patient little nurse to the

three boys, who were as wild as most boys are when born in outlandish regions, accustomed to much life in the open, and the companionship of horses and cattle.

And yet she was by no means a very good girl. She showed a great tendency towards telling untruths—a trait inherited, perhaps, from her mother, but fostered by the intuitive knowledge she had that Mrs. Warner never looked on her with much favour; on the contrary, she felt that she was regarded with distrust and suspicion. Sometimes, too, she was jealous of the affection shown by the mother to her boys; and then she became obstinate, and would often hide herself for hours when anything had vexed her, and cry until her head ached and she was utterly weary; waiting till her friend Stephen came home, and creeping in after him, soothed and comforted by his gentle, kindly greeting.

The settlement at Santa Anna, near Fort Marshall, had been broken up after a few years, and Mr. Warner had removed his family to San Juan, a flourishing little town, also on the Arkansas, where they had more society, and where they would be able to find a school for the boys by-and-by. He was still unable to go East, as times had been very

hard, and, although he had much land, he had little money.

One day Mrs. Wilson, a neighbour, came to pay Eleanor a visit, and whilst out lost a gold locket, although she did not miss it till she got home. The following morning she came to ask Mrs. Warner if she had seen anything of it. A thorough search was made, but in vain ; and Mrs. Wilson concluded that it had been dropped on the road.

A few weeks later, Ronald, the youngest boy, who always slept with Candalaria, said,—

“Mamma, Ronnie wants Candy’s pretty-pretty.”

“What do you mean, Ronald ?” asked his mother, who never denied him anything he asked for.

“What Candy has on her neck,” said the child.

Candalaria became very red and was going out of the room.

“Ronnie wants it, and Ronnie will have it,” cried the boy ; and he ran up to her and made a grab at her neck.

The girl looked so troubled and confused that Mrs. Warner felt sure something was wrong.

“Tell me at once what he means,” she said sternly.

“I don’t know,” answered the girl.

“Yes you do know, Candy—the pretty thing

Ronnie was playing with this morning in bed, and Candy was angry, and scolded Ronnie."

The girl's hand went involuntarily to her bosom, but she said nothing. Suddenly an idea struck Mrs. Warner. She went up to Candalaria and unfastened her dress at the throat. There was the missing ornament, hung round her neck by a bit of scarlet braid!

Poor little Mexican! She loved bright colouring and glittering ornaments instinctively—another inherited weakness. Often she had longed to have something gay and pretty; and when temptation came in her way, it had been too much for her.

"I knew you were a story-teller, but never suspected you of being a thief," said her mistress, in a hard, stern voice, taking off the locket from the neck of the girl, who looked dark and sullen, but neither spoke a word nor shed a tear.

"Now go to your own room till your master comes home, when we shall see what is to be done with you. What will he say when he knows you are a thief, do you think? Go, bad girl!"

* * * * *

Mr. Warner always made the child he had rescued call him "father," but when Eleanor was angry she spoke of him to poor Candalaria as "your master";

and the girl soon got into the habit of calling her "Mrs. Warner," when, as she grew older, she began to understand the light in which she was regarded by her mistress.

She did not need telling twice. With a shamed yet dogged look on her face, and misery in her heart—for she loved her master, and could not bear to grieve him—she went to her little room and flung herself, hopelessly, on the floor.

Half an hour later, Tom, the eldest boy, who was now seven years old, came running in, and found her still lying there.

"Candy, I heard mamma tell Mrs. Wilson you are a very bad girl, and that she should ask father to send you away to live somewhere else, because you are a thief, and will teach us to steal."

The girl moaned, but said nothing.

Tom was an affectionate little fellow, and could not bear to see any one in trouble. He sat down on the floor beside Candy, and tried to make her look up, but in vain.

"Why don't you ask mamma not to be angry any more? Tell her you're sorry, and will never do it again."

Still Candy did not speak.

“Oh, Candy, do get up quick, before father comes home. Don’t you know it’s awfully wicked to steal? Jack Wilson says they hung a man up to a tree once for stealing a blanket; he saw him hanging, quite dead.”

Candalaria’s heart seemed to stop beating for a few moments. It was only too true what Tom said: she had heard the noise of the wild, angry men as they hurried the thief away to be lynched. If the father said she must go away, and people got to know why, they might fetch her and hang her up too. How awful!

Tom, not being able to make her speak, soon left her.

“Send me away!” she kept repeating to herself. “Send me away! Where to? Never to see the father and the little boys again!”

And even if they did not hang her, she would have to be a “hired girl” somewhere, like Anna, over at Stokes’s ranch, who had a cruel, drunken master, and was beaten and ill-used sometimes; and who talked often so wickedly that it frightened Candalaria to hear her. No! if they were going to send her away, she would run away now, and then she should not see the sad, grieved look that came into the father’s

eyes whenever she was naughty and told a lie. How would he look now, she wondered, when he heard she was a thief?

The girl jumped up, seized her sun-bonnet, and slipped out through the window—the house had only the ground floor—and, unnoticed by any one, began to run, she knew not whither, straight away across the vast plains. She would sit down and think, she said to herself, when she got a long way over, to where the great clumps of pear cactus grew, where they could not see from the house.

It was about three in the afternoon when Candalaria took flight. Mrs. Warner had lain down for her usual afternoon's nap, with her youngest boy beside her, and Tom and Alick had begun a game with Jack Wilson inside the corral; the hired man was busy, so she had time to get far enough away before any one thought about her at all.

It was much farther than she thought to the cactus plants; but Candalaria reached them at last, and sat down, heated and breathless, behind the largest of them. When she was a little rested, she tried to think what she could do with herself. It may sound strange, but the girl had never been so far from home, all alone, in her life before. The farthest she

had been was to some of the neighbouring homesteads, which were all nearer the centre of the settlement than Mrs. Warner's. It was not safe for a girl, or even a woman, to be alone in these wild regions. She must get to some shelter before night came. The Indians might get hold of her, and carry her off, she thought. She was not afraid of the poor Mexicans, who had some huts near the town; but although she could not remember her mother or her miserable state as a little child, she always had disagreeable sensations when she passed one of these huts, and never could bear to look at them, from some instinctive aversion. She was afraid of the rough miners, who rode in to buy at the stores, from the mining camps; their language and looks were savage and wild compared with Mr. Warner's, and those of the few men with whom he was acquainted. Where should she go?

The sun was sinking; the two Spanish peaks became darker and more distinct across the plains, and everything seemed so still and lonely that the girl's courage failed, and she began to cry bitterly; but after a time her tears ceased, and she was conscious of a sensation of hunger. The little prairie dogs, too, were beginning to think it was supper-

time, and they came popping out of their holes quite near to Candalaria.

Suddenly she remembered that there were some French people living on the banks of the Arkansas River, only a few miles from San Juan. They had called once to see Mrs. Warner; and the wife, Madame Dupuis, had looked so bright and lively, and was dressed so gaily, that the little Mexican girl quite fell in love with her, and madame had praised her, and said she would like to have a smart little girl like Candalaria to help her at home. Mrs. Warner had one day pointed out the clump of cottonwood trees where they lived, beside the river; it was only a few miles farther on; she could just distinguish it in the twilight. She would go and beg madame to let her stay there. Perhaps she would not be so angry as Mrs. Warner was, if she told her she would never steal any more, and she would work very hard to please her.

So away Candalaria started again—so quickly, that the little prairie dogs were all scared, and ran down into their holes in a hurry. It was a long way, after all, to the French ranch, and the darkness crept over everything before the poor little fugitive could reach it. At last she could see no longer, and

then she sat down again in despair. Her feet, too, had stumbled over some of the smaller cacti, and their dreadful little thorns had penetrated her slight shoes, which were only intended for the house. Those who have made the acquaintance of these same little thorns know what exquisite annoyance and pain they cause. At last the weary child could go no farther ; she sat down in despair. And then she heard the sad hooting of the owls, and, later on, the more dismal howling of the coyotes—the wolves of the prairies. It was very awful to be all alone in this great solitude !

How she got through the two long hours before the moon rose, she could not afterwards tell. When it became a little lighter, and she could distinguish anything, she found she was close to a good bridle-track. Later on she was able to make out the river, which soon shone before her like a broad band of smooth molten silver. It was not far away ; but she could not see the grove of cotton-wood trees to tell her where the ranch lay. At last, in the distance, appeared a man on horseback, riding swiftly towards her along the track. His horse's hoofs sounded through the silence of the night on the soft, springy turf. He was coming from the direction of the river,

perhaps from the ranch. In her light cotton dress he would be sure to see her, even though she lay quite still.

Suppose it should be an Indian—one of those wild cruel ones, who still appeared from time to time—or, what she feared quite as much, a rough from the mining camp up in the mountains! Her heart beat frightfully as he came nearer and nearer; she dared not raise her eyes when the man drew rein close to her.

CHAPTER II,
A GOOD SHEPHERD.

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A GOOD SHEPHERD.

THE horseman dismounted and went close up to the crouching figure of poor Candalaria. Then she gave a frightened glance upwards to learn the worst.

Oh, joy ! It was the kind minister of the little church at San Juan, where Mr. Warner's family attended service every Sunday morning. No need for fear now. Although he had never spoken to her, as he had only been a very short time in the town, and Candalaria was always sent out of the room when her mistress had visitors, yet the girl knew almost every expression of his face. She had loved to look at him in church, and she had listened to the tones of his voice without thinking of the meaning of the words, but as "one who hears a pleasant song." With that intuitive perception of character common to the child and the savage, she felt he was

good, and that only what was kind and gentle might be expected from him.

Mr. Grahame uttered an exclamation of surprise when he saw the pale little face with the large black eyes, on which the rays of the moonlight fell as they were lifted timidly towards his.

"Whatever are you doing here at this time of night, my child?" he asked.

Candalaria did not know what answer to make, and for that reason, no doubt, and also from a feeling of reaction after her great fear, she began to sob in a way that quite alarmed the kind man.

"Nay, nay, do not cry so; but tell me what it all means," he said, as he took hold of the girl's hand and drew her towards him. "How did you come here, and what are you thinking of to stay on these lonely plains in the night-time?"

"I don't want to stay here," sobbed the girl. "I wanted to get over to the French people's ranch down by the river."

"What did you want there? I know your face now that I see it better: you are the little Mexican girl who lives at Mrs. Warner's. They would surely not think of sending you such a distance all alone."

Should she tell an untruth again? thought Canda-

laria. Should she say that Mrs. Warner had sent her there, and that she had lost her way? They could not be very far from the ranch, and he would perhaps offer to take her to it on his horse. If she were once safely there, she thought she could persuade Madame Dupuis to be a friend to her, and to let her stay with her. As Mrs. Warner did not seem to want her, it could easily be arranged; and after that she would always be good, and not tell an untruth again as long as she lived.

Mr. Grahame noted the hesitation on the girl's face, and guessed that something was not as it should be.

"Answer me at once, child, and tell me only the truth."

Then, with much sobbing and many pauses, Candalaria told him the whole case. She did not conceal her wrong-doing; she said, too, that she was afraid she never should be good so long as she lived with Mrs. Warner—that the father was kind to her, and that she loved him and the boys; but Mrs. Warner had never liked her, and that made her feel wicked and do naughty things.

The minister listened patiently. He had seated himself on the turf beside Candy, holding his horse, which was less patient than its master, by the bridle.

"See," he said, in a cheerful tone, "Bob wants to get home ; we have been many miles to-day, over to Big Gulch to see a poor miner who lies there dying. Bob is hungry, and so am I ; you are, too, I am sure. You shall ride behind me, and we will talk a little more, if the horse will let us, on the way home."

"But I am afraid to go back home," said Candy.

"Not with me, surely ?"

"Will you let such a bad girl ride with you ? And, oh, will you ask father to forgive me, and not to let Mrs. Warner be too angry with me or send me away ?"

"Indeed I will, my poor child. Now let us make haste ; it is very late, and my wife will be looking anxiously for me, and so will those at home for you ; and when you say your prayers to-night, ask God in heaven to forgive you, too, and to make you a good girl—a brave, truthful girl—so that everyone shall love and trust you."

Whilst Candalaria is riding back to San Juan behind Mr. Grahame, we will return still more quickly to the home from which she had tried to fly, and see what effect her disappearance had caused.

At five o'clock Mrs. Warner had risen from her

siesta, and called for Candalaria to take Ronald to make him tidy, and to see where the other boys were, and that they were all ready for supper, which she herself usually assisted in preparing. The girl was nowhere to be found.

"She is afraid, and has hidden herself," said Mrs. Warner. "She cannot, however, be far away; we must find her, and we will say nothing about her naughtiness until after the children are in bed."

The outhouses were searched thoroughly, the hay ransacked, and cries for Candalaria sounded everywhere; but in vain.

"Where can the girl be?" cried Mrs. Warner.

Denis, the hired man, had not seen her since the morning, he said.

Tom was greatly troubled. He told how he had found Candy lying on the floor in her bedroom, and that she would not speak to him when he asked her to tell his mother that she was sorry.

Mr. Warner came in whilst the search was going on, and was told what had happened.

"What can the poor child have done with herself?" he wondered.

"Poor child, indeed! She is a bad, deceitful girl, and she will ruin the boys if she stays with them. It

is all in the blood, Steeve, and the older she gets the worse it will be."

"Let us find her first, Nell, before we think of punishment. If she has run away in her fear, it may go ill with her."

"She has often hidden herself before, and is probably over at Stokes's ranch, or somewhere in the town. She is too frightened to go far away. Let us have supper, and then Denis can go and look for her in one direction, whilst you go in the other. I shall have to put the boys to bed to-night myself, I suppose."

By the time supper was over and inquiries had been made all about the scattered township, it was quite dark, and Stephen came home feeling very unhappy about Candalaria. He always considered that his wife did not manage her properly, and he feared that now, in her distress and terror, she had done something desperate. It did not occur to him that she might have struck across the plains; there seemed no object in her taking that direction. He had his horse saddled, however, and rode off along the river-side, sending Denis away on another track. They took every way but the one in which they would have come on the fugitive, or have met her

riding behind the minister, and she and Mr. Grahame had been at home an hour before either of them returned.

To do Mrs. Warner justice, she was glad to see Candalaria back. After the boys were in bed, whilst sitting alone, she had come to better thoughts concerning the matter. Where could the girl go to, after all? and, having adopted her, they must keep her now, for better or for worse. Still, she was greatly annoyed and much exercised to know what would be the best course to adopt with her. It never occurred to her that she ought to ask Divine guidance in the matter. She had never been in the habit of casting her cares on a wise Father, who cares for all His children, and she had never tried to teach the little Mexican by any other law than that of fear.

Her feelings had so far relented that she thanked Mr. Grahame for his kindness, asked him to come in, and told Candalaria, not unkindly, to eat some supper and then go to bed.

"I will come and call on you to-morrow, Mrs. Warner," said the clergyman. "I should like to have a little chat with you, but my wife will be anxious. I was detained over at Big Gulch longer than usual, and this meeting with your little maid has made me still

later. May I ask you to deal leniently with her? She has told me of her faults, and how she has displeased you; but I hope that she will not give you cause to be so troubled about her again."

"She has been a trouble to me from the first, Mr. Grahame."

With the hope that he might be of service to Candalaria, for whom he felt the sympathy a good man always does for something weak and suffering which he has rescued or helped, the new friend did not try to excuse or palliate her offences, but answered, with tact,—

"She must have been so, Mrs. Warner; these half-savage races are always difficult to deal with, and require a great amount of patience and forbearance. Let us hope that she may yet do well, and reward you and Mr. Warner for all your kindness to her."

Candalaria did not eat much supper, and she had crept off silently to bed before the father returned, discouraged, after a long, fruitless ride down the river-side and back over the plains.

"Back at last!" cried Eleanor, as he entered the house.

"Yes, but no news of the poor child, Nell."

"Oh, she is here, safe enough, Steeve, and gone to

bed, where I hope she is feeling sorry for all the trouble she has given to-day."

"Thank God!" cried Stephen. "But don't be too hard on her, wife. Tell me how she got home, and where she has been."

"Really, Steeve, I hardly know. Mr. Grahame found her somewhere out on the plains, and brought her back on his horse. He is coming to see us to-morrow, and will give us the history. She has probably given him a full account of herself on the way."

Stephen sighed, and looked worried. Perhaps, from having no daughters, only sons, he felt the more kindly towards the little Mexican girl; and it really vexed him that Eleanor had so little affection for her.

"I will talk to her very seriously to-morrow, Nell," he said, presently. "Let us get to bed now; I am tired, and have to be up early to see that the men get off in good time with the cattle."

The boys were all delighted to find Candy at home when they awoke the next morning.

"I could hardly get to sleep for thinking about you!" said Tom. "And then I dreamt that Jack Wilson had told about you, and that you were being hung up under one of the cotton-wood trees."

Candy shuddered and turned pale.

"Did you go far, Candy?" asked Alick; "and did you see any Indians—I mean real wild ones—out on the plains?"

"No, Alick; but don't ask Candy anything about it. Candy's head aches so badly."

"Poor Candy!" said impulsive but loving little Ronald. "Ronnie's so sorry. Candy shall lie down and have Ronnie's picture-book."

She put her arms round the boy, kissed him warmly, and then, after having finished dressing him, went downstairs, with an anxious, timid face, to meet Mr. Warner. She dreaded his being grieved with her far more than she feared the anger of her mistress.

He was out by the corral, however, and she began to help in the kitchen, where Mrs. Warner was; Denis being the only "help" they had both for the house and the yard.

"Now, be quick, Candalaria," said she, "and let me see by your good behaviour that you repent of your wickedness. If you can show me that, I will try to forget what has passed, and not make an example of you, as you deserve."

This day, which began so heavily for Candalaria, was to be a more eventful one than any in her short life before, except, perhaps, the one on which she was

found hanging—poor little mortal!—like a sign of the lamb one sees often over a hosier's door.

Whilst she went about the house, sadly, and yet meekly trying to do her best, because of her promise to Mr. Grahame—wondering now and then whether he would remember to come and ask Mrs. Warner to allow her to go to the Sunday-school—the old Mexican woman who had sold her lay dying in her miserable hut at Santa Anna, and a messenger came to beg Mr. Warner to come to her at once, as she had something of importance to say to him before she became speechless.

No wonder she had felt no love or pity for the poor babe! It was not her own, but the child of a Mexican lady of good family, who had died on a journey when her little daughter was born. The father, an officer, had perished during the last war; and no one was there to care for the orphan, or to find out whether it had any relations left who would adopt it.

The dying woman told Stephen that the lady had stopped to rest in her hut at Santa Maria, where she was then living; that a man-servant who had been in attendance on her had gone on to find help for his mistress, but had never returned. Some money and a few jewels which the lady wore, and which she

thought she had hidden away safely, had been afterwards stolen from her—all except a small gold heart which she had transferred from the poor lady's neck to her own, intending, she said, to give it to the child when it was older.

“Take it,” she uttered, feebly, uncovering her poor shrivelled throat.

Stephen cut the string to which it was attached. On the surface were engraved the letters “A. G.”

“Were there no letters or papers about the lady?” he asked.

“Yes; but I burned them.”

“Why did you do that?”

The woman did not answer at once; she seemed to struggle with physical as well as moral weakness.

Stephen kept his eyes fixed on hers, and repeated the question.

“I wanted the money,” she gasped at length.

Seeing that the wretched woman had nothing more to tell, and that she was fast sinking, Stephen called to a girl who was near the hut to come to her, bade her stay there, and he would send some one else as soon as possible, who would do all that was left to be done for the dying; and then he rode away.

"What will Eleanor say to this?" he thought. "She will perhaps feel more mercifully inclined towards Candalaria as the child of well-born people than she did to the despised and ill-treated little out-cast. Candy's affairs have certainly come to a crisis, and please God they shall take a turn for the better." He took the heart out of his pocket: "A. G." The letters told him nothing. "They may serve as a clue some day, however," he said to himself, as he urged his horse on more quickly.

Candalaria was dusting in the parlour when he reached home. Her heart was very heavy, and the duster went up to her weeping eyes almost as often as it did to the chairs. She heard the father's horse approach, then his steps on the veranda, and she trembled with nervous anticipation of what his greeting would be.

Stephen went at once to his wife, and told her of his strange interview with the dying Mexican.

"Let us forget all about the poor girl's misdeeds, Nell," he said, in conclusion, "and adopt her afresh. She does not come of the low set you disliked so much, after all; and, with some patience and some instruction that I mean her to have, she may yet be a great comfort to you."

Mr. Grahame arrived before Mrs. Warner had time to say anything worth relating. The three talked over the child's past, and made some plans for her future; then Candalaria was sent for. She had fled from the kitchen into her own room on hearing Mr. Grahame's voice in the passage.

Standing at the parlour door for a moment, she looked timidly from one face to the other's. That of Mr. Warner seemed to promise protection and comfort.

"Don't be afraid of us, child," he said, kindly. "Come here."

She went quickly and shyly up to him. The touch of his arm, as he put it round her, reassured and yet made her tremble, bringing tears—not bitter ones, however—to her eyes.

"I will never be naughty any more, father," she said, pleadingly. "Ask Mrs. Warner to forgive me. I will try so hard to please her."

Stephen led her across to his wife, who felt embarrassed under the observant eyes of the minister, and did not know what to say. She did the best thing, perhaps, under the circumstances when she kissed the weeping child and said nothing.

Candalaria was very much bewildered on receiving

the first kiss she had had from Eleanor as long as she could remember. She was still more so later on in the evening, when the gold heart was fastened about her brown little throat, and she was told that it had once belonged to her mother, and she was to wear it always.

"My mother ! my own mother !" thought the girl, wonderingly. Then a feeling as though loving arms had been wrapped around her—such a feeling as she had never been conscious of before—filled her heart.

"Did she wear this always ?" she asked.

"Most likely, Candy ; your mother was a Mexican, and they are fond of such things."

A Mexican ! Such a one as those low, dirty people who live in mud huts like holes in the hillside ! The thought was not pleasant.

"A Mexican ?" she repeated, anxiously.

"Yes ; but not like those you know. She was a lady, and your father was an officer."

Stephen it was who said this ; he had divined the thought expressed in her face, and wanted to make her happier.

She felt very weary after so many tears and so much excitement, and, as soon as the boys were un-

dressed and put to bed, she was glad to creep in herself beside Ronnie, where her thoughts wandered back over the day that was closing—the strangest and fullest of her short life. Then she remembered her promise to the minister, and she jumped out of bed again in order to kneel down. “O God, please make me good ; help me to keep good, and make Mrs. Warner love me, for Christ’s sake. Amen,” she prayed.

When she lay down again, her hand closed over the little gold heart. How it seemed to comfort her ! It would lie always there, where the locket had lain ; and it seemed to speak of love and forgiveness. Life would never be the same to her as it had been. She suspected this, however, only very dimly ; not having been taught much, she knew nothing well beyond the limits of this family and home, outside which she had only vague ideas of wide, endless plains, rugged mountains, Indians, men who were to be feared and avoided, and wild animals.

No definite thoughts of parents, of whom she had never been told anything, had hitherto shaped themselves in the child’s brain ; part of Stephen’s bargain with the Mexican woman had been that she was never to show herself at his house or to communicate

in any way with Candalaria. She had, however, felt that she was different from the fairer-skinned boys, and had been conscious that even that bad Stokes's Anna treated her as something inferior to herself; and the feeling had pained and irritated her. Now that she knew her father had been an officer, like the gentlemen to whom Mrs. Warner was so polite, and Mr. Warner had called her mother "a lady," she felt better and happier. The treasure on her neck sent a warm thrill through the lonely heart as she thought "If my mother had lived, I should have been caressed and petted like Ronnie here."

She was to go to school, too—not only on Sundays, but every day—to that kind, cheerful Mrs. Carey, who had always greeted her pleasantly when she passed her door.

After thinking well over what the dying woman had told him, Stephen Warner concluded that he had better go and see Judge Lynchem, to tell him what he had learned, and to request him to make a note of all that was known of Candalaria's origin, and of the fact that he and Eleanor, his wife, had adopted her.

He found the learned judge at home, in front of his frame-house, the central figure of a motley as-

semblage of frontiersmen, Indians, Mexicans, and lean mongrel dogs. Candalaria's little history was duly registered ; the only clue to her parentage lying, perhaps, in those letters "A. G." which were engraved on the gold heart.

CHAPTER III.
THE NEW NAME.

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THE NEW NAME.

BEFORE Candalaria began to go to school, Mr. Grahame said he should like her to be baptized. She was most anxious that it should be done at once, and she seemed pleased when Mr. Grahame suggested to Stephen that the little Mexican, on being received into the church, and, as it were, a second time into his family, should have a new name given to her. The child was just in that transition state in which nothing fresh seemed to surprise her. A new life was beginning; she was to go to school; new dresses were being made for her; and why should she not have a new name also?

"What shall it be, wife?" asked Stephen. "I always liked the name of Mary or Annie, but it shall be whatever you prefer."

"Oh, I would much rather it were another Mexican or Spanish name, Steeve."

“Why that, Nell?”

“Because I do not wish her ever to be taken for our own child; and she might be, with an English name.”

“Really, Nell, you are incomprehensible to me sometimes; however, I suppose you women are more notional than we men. Settle the matter with the minister; I have no more to say about it.”

Mrs. Grahame, when called into council by her husband, suggested “Carita.”

“It seems a pretty and a suitable name for the poor little lamb,” she said.

They had lost their only child since coming to San Juan, and she was a tender-hearted woman.

“Just the thing,” was the minister’s answer. “They can call her Carrie too, if they like, which will be conveniently near Candy.”

Before the day of her baptism, Mr. Grahame said he would like to have some quiet talk alone with her, so Candalaria came, with some awe, but yet without fear, to the minister’s study.

There he talked to her very plainly and very affectionately. He taught her the meaning of the sacred rite; told her also of the new birth, of the love of the Father, who says, “And ye shall be My sons and

daughters ;” of the love of His only begotten Son, which made Him “come to seek and to save that which was lost.” How He gave His life for the sheep and the lambs, of which she, Candalaria, was one. The experiences of the last few days seemed to have prepared the soil for the seed of the sower, and it took root ; she seemed to grasp the significance, and to be able to feel the truth of all he thus taught her. Then Mr. Grahame read over and explained to her two texts. In the one was, “I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written ;” and in the other, “and I will write upon him My new name.”

A new name was given to the maiden that day in her home down here, and she knew that her name was written in the Book of Life above.

Carita, as we shall now call her, felt often very bewildered at the change in her position. She would run to her little mirror to see if it was really herself who looked out so much more cheerfully on the world, who wore a gold ornament, and for whom those new dresses were being made. And softly to herself she would repeat her new name over and over again.

The fact that she was not the child of a low, squalid woman could not fail to make a difference in

Eleanor's estimate of her, as she never pretended to have adopted her from any higher motive than that of satisfying her husband. Now she graciously told Carita she might call her "mother" or "mamma," as the boys did, adding that she hoped she would not prove ungrateful, but improve, so as to be of some little use some day,

"Oh, my eye! Ain't we fine, though!" cried Jack Wilson, when he saw Carita in one of her new frocks, on the Saturday before she began her school life. "So you're going to be one of Mother Carey's chickens—that's what we call the girls there. I give the old girl a fine lot of worry, I can tell you; but if ever you split on any of my school larks, I'll tell about the locket."

The girl flushed crimson, and tears came into her eyes. She had hoped never to hear it named again, but had forgotten that Jack, who knew all about it, was to be one of her schoolfellows.

"Look here, Candy. I've been saving up ever so long to buy these;" and the terrible boy showed her a bright bowie knife and a small six-shooter. "You won't be in my class, as you can't read much; but mind you, tell no tales, or I'll be even with you."

Jack was a bully, like most bad boys; and as the

Warners were the only intimate friends his parents had made in the place, he was afraid some of his misdeeds might be carried to them through Carita, and so thought it safest to intimidate her to begin with. His sister, Adelina, was completely under his influence, and never attempted to interfere with his wild pranks.

Sunday was a very happy day to our little maiden. She felt so pleased with her new dress, the nice Bible and the prayer-book (a present from the kind father), and a bright-coloured ribbon by which the heart was hung about her brown little throat. Stokes's Anna, who also came to Sunday-school, observed that she was quite "sot up," with it all; and she might have given herself up to foolish and vain thoughts, had it not been for the love and devotion that filled her heart as she looked at the kind clergyman, remembering the ride in front of his saddle six days ago, and the good words he spoke to her then.

"C'est l'amour, l'amour qui fait tourner le monde," says the old French song—" 'tis love, 'tis love that makes the world go round;" the sunshine of the heart that quickens its tender germs into form and beauty. Carita's nature was a passionate one, and it was well that it had not been left to itself too long, or it might

have fed on what was hurtful and killing to the tender growth of a young soul.

The schoolroom, rude and bare as it was, save for a few brightly coloured texts and pictures, seemed a beautiful place to the Mexican girl as she listened to the hymns she would soon be able to join in ; and when Mr. Grahame talked about the good Shepherd and His love, her thoughts went back to the cactus bush on the lonely plains, where she had lain and listened in terror to the awful sounds of the night, until a loving voice and kind hand had come to bring her home again.

After school she joined the Warner family in church, and in the afternoon she took the three boys into the hayshed, and, climbing up on to the top of the fragrant stack, held a little Sunday-school of her own for their benefit, whilst Mrs. Warner rested awhile. Nothing marred the brightness of that day, and it was the first of many similar ones, which strengthened the girl for some darker ones that had to come later on.

Mother Carey, as Jack called her, was a sweet and strong natured old Methodist dame. Her husband, a stone-mason, had not the same strength of character as herself, but he was a gentle, loving creature, and

the two were very happy together. They had lately celebrated their silver wedding, on which occasion their only son, who was studying in some town east, with the intention of becoming a "travelling preacher," had composed a very fine poem indeed, which was read and appreciated by all Mr. and Mrs. Carey's friends, and afterwards published in the *San Juan Observer*. It was to support this son at college that the dear, energetic mother kept her day-school, which was no easy work, for some of those frontier boys were of the wildest order, young as they were. Although she prided herself on being a Methodist, and Mr. John Wesley's picture, with that of Mr. Fletcher of Madeley, formed the chief adornment of her parlour, her mother having brought them from England sixty years ago, yet she loved Mr. Grahame and his wife, and he had no more constant and faithful allies than herself and her husband. She had been educated in a public school in Philadelphia, had always read much, and was well fitted for preparing the boys and girls for the higher town school.

Carita was so teachable and well behaved that she became Mrs. Carey's favourite pupil ; whilst, brightened and encouraged by the morning experiences, she did her best to please Mrs. Warner after the

school hours were over. During the three years she was allowed to remain at her studies, she made such good progress in every way, that she developed into an intelligent, companionable girl. The religious instruction she received meanwhile from Mr. Grahame and his wife also sank deeply into her heart.

I have dwelt rather long on the description of her teachers, because their influence changed the tenor of her life, and in them she found friends who were afterwards often of service to her.

* * * * *

One evening, just after Carita had left school altogether, Stephen came home looking terribly depressed. He had often felt so of late. The country was more settled, and his contracts for the supply of cattle had fallen off. The railroads bringing an influx of miners and settlers had not yet come to that part of the State, and times were hard. Stephen Warner had speculated largely in land, expecting to be able to dispose of it again to advantage, just before commercial stagnation had set in; so that he was now what is called "land poor," being eaten up by taxes, which, though light in themselves, mounted up heavily where large tracts of land yielding no produce were held.

Besides Mariposa, he had a dairy farm up in the mountains, about forty miles distant, amongst the foothills of the Sangre de Cristo range. It was called "Elk Ranch," and was beautifully situated on one of the high-lying natural parks peculiar to Colorado, surrounded by picturesque peaks and pitch-pine forests. The place was lonely, and Eleanor never cared to stay there long together. A man and his wife lived in a cabin on the ranch, and did all that was necessary, except during harvest time.

"I shall have to go to Washington in the course of a few weeks, Nell," said Stephen, sitting down, weary and anxious looking.

"Oh dear, Steeve! I thought you had arranged your business in writing."

"No, it seems I must be on the spot myself, to do what I want. The fact is, Nell, I am sick of this state of things, and of the taxes I am paying on land, out of which I shall make nothing for some years. I want to get rid of the greater part of it, at any price. You have never liked life on the plains, or perhaps we might have done better. I do not blame you for it, Nell," he added quickly, as he saw she looked irritated.

"And what do you intend to do if you can sell the land, Steeve?"

"My idea is to let Mariposa to Judge Lynchem, who is wanting a larger house, he tells me; and to move you all up to Elk Lodge, before I start. The summer will be very pleasant there, and you will have almost all you need, excepting groceries, on the farm. I may be away for some months; but when I return we will consider whether to invest the money I hope to have from my land sales in enlarging and stocking the mountain ranch, or to take a different course altogether. As you have always longed to go back East, we might perhaps be able to do it for a few years—at any rate, so as to give the boys better advantages than we are likely to have here for some time."

"Why can we not stay here until you return, Steeve?"

"Because I shall want all the money I can get together to pay my expenses, and I can sell this place now."

Eleanor, as usual, thought more of her own comfort than of her husband's anxieties.

"It will be horribly lonely up there, Steeve; Denis and Hephzibah are to be married next month, so he

will be leaving us." Hephzibah was a "help," engaged when Carita began to go to school.

"So much the better, Nell. Sam Morris and his wife will do all you want on the farm ; there will not be room for them in the house with you, but I will have the huntsman's hut fitted up for them. It is within reach of call, and Carita is so useful now, she will do most of the housework, and look after the boys also."

Elk Lodge was a large log cabin. It had received its name from an Englishman, who had been hunting in its vicinity the previous summer. A park within half a mile of it had, until lately, been a favourite feeding ground of the elk deer. Over the cabin porch were two pairs of immense antlers, interlaced closely. The animals had become entangled in fighting, and died in a gulch near, unable to free themselves.

Mariposa was a pleasant home. Eleanor, disliking the outside life of the plains, had turned all her attention indoors, and become, as her neighbours said, house-proud. She looked round at her household goods, and said,—

"Where in the world should I put all my furniture?"

"As much as we can in the mountain house, which we could easily enlarge by adding a lean-to kitchen."

"House, indeed! Why, Steeve, you know it is only a cabin."

"A good large one, Nell, with plenty of sleeping room in the loft."

"Well, and what should we do with the rest?"

"Sell it to Mrs. Lynchem; she will need more than she has."

This was too much for Eleanor's feelings; she felt deeply aggrieved by the suggestion, and burst into tears. The idea of a sale of her furniture was apparently more painful than the thought of parting with her husband.

Stephen felt mortified and helpless.

It would cost him a great deal to leave his wife and children for some months, and only a feeling of necessity impelled him to do it. The boys came running in at this juncture, but stopped short in dismay when they saw their mother weeping.

"Here, boys," cried Steeve, "I've brought you some new fishing tackle; you may ask Denis if he can find time to go down to the river with you, to try it."

He was always considerate, and had got this purposely, in order to send them out of the way whilst he talked over his plans with Eleanor.

"Mother is not very well," he said to Carita, who

was busily sewing on the veranda. "Make some good tea for her, and persuade her to lie down."

What man is there, however kind and gentle, who does not hate the sight of tears? It was no use saying anything more to his wife just now, so Steeve turned to go out again.

"And when will you have supper, father?" asked Carita, anxiously. She saw he was troubled about something. "You scarcely ate anything at dinner time."

"I will come back in about an hour, Carrie."

Then he saddled his horse again—it had not yet been turned out for the night—and galloped off to a cotton-wood copse some distance up the river-side.

Dismounting, he hitched his horse's bridle to a tree, pulled out his pipe, and lay down on the ground to try and get over his vexation as he smoked.

"Nell would never second him in anything," he said bitterly to himself. "It was always the same. The fact was, he had spoiled her, as her parents had done before him. He found he must bear her burden as well as his own, and never expect any help or sympathy from her."

A French proverb says that in love there is always "Un qui baise et un qui tend la joue"—one who

kisses, and one who only turns the cheek. Let us hope it is not always so one-sided! Unfortunately it was very much the case in poor Stephen's lot.

When the pipe was exhausted, he jumped up again, sprang into the saddle, and entered his wife's parlour a little later with a kind word for Eleanor, whom he found lying on the sofa, too much upset, she said, to sit down to supper with him.

"I have good news for you, Eleanor," he said, next morning, when he came in to breakfast.

"Are you not going then, after all; or are you taking us to Washington with you?"

"Neither, Nell; but you will not be so lonely in the mountains as we feared. I have just heard from Judge Lynchem, that an Englishman, named Heath, has bought a ranch below ours, on Pepperbox Flat. He is bringing his wife and family out to settle there. They are expected next month, so I shall leave you with much more comfort. The judge says he has had a very good account of them from our consul in Liverpool."

CHAPTER IV.

TEARS AND LAUGHTER.



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TWO years passed away rapidly to all excepting Eleanor, who, during her husband's absences, which became more and more frequent, had nursed her grievances and brooded over them until she had grown very morbid, and at last fallen into poor health. The family were still in the mountain ranch. All that Stephen had been able to do was stocking this better and enlarging the log cabin, which now made a very comfortable home, rough as it was. He was sorry for his wife, whom he loved still, but he felt very anxious about the future of his three boys. He wished them to have a better education, and also to see something of the more civilized world, even though they might afterwards settle down in the West again. If he could find purchasers for more of his land, he might not only manage this, but also give Eleanor a thorough

change of scene for a year or two ; perhaps take her to Europe, whither, like most of her educated countrywomen, she had always longed to travel.

Carita was now eighteen years of age, an intelligent, loving woman, for girls develop fast in the Western world. She was the mainstay of the household, the mentor of the boys, and the umpire in all their differences. Eleanor did a part of the housework, but Carita had to get up very early in the morning to do her own share—the larger one always—so as to be able to hear the boys read for an hour or two daily, there being no school within many miles of Elk Ranch. She did her best to keep them out of harm's way, and from the society of the cowboys round ; a difficult task when their father was from home, for as soon as his back was turned, Tom, now a fine strong lad of thirteen, would be off over the hills with one of Stephen's guns, or down to Rattlesnake Bar to find a companion amongst the settlers there.

"If you would only take to the Heath boys, Tom!" Carita would say.

"Oh, they ain't up to anything," he would reply scornfully.

"Tom don't care for any fellow who don't carry

a six-shooter and a bowie knife," observed Alick one day.

"You only care for your stomach, Al," retorted Tom.

Alick was not strong, and he never cared to stray away very far ; but he would gorge himself with the sour choke-cherries that grew profusely in the gully behind the house, then be ill afterwards for days. He worried Susan Morris, too, by getting into the dairy and tampering with the cream, littered the living-room with rubbish ; and when Carita remonstrated, he would appeal to his mother, who allowed him to do anything so long as she herself was not incommoded thereby.

Ronald was the favourite—an impulsive, warm-hearted little lad ; but what a pickle he was ! When Judge Forbes's boy, commonly called "the Buster," was staying at the Craigie Lea Farm during the summer, Ronald would wander down over Pepper-box Flat to meet him, and the two paddled in the creek, watching the beavers, and crammed themselves with wild strawberries and raspberries in the slopes near the mountain stream, without any fear of lurking rattlesnake or clumsy bear. Does not every Rocky Mountain boy know that the former will not bite unless he is disturbed ? and even then will shake

his rattle three times before he springs; and the latter is a heavy, slow, phlegmatic old beast, who seldom comes down from the upper to the lower mountain regions, excepting when the acorns are ripe, and then you hear the creature tumbling and rolling down amongst the dwarf oaks, and can get out of his way fast enough; besides that, he is only dangerous when worried.

The young scamps would sometimes turn on the water in passing, and irrigate Pepperbox Flat, when Mr. Heath and his boys were out of the way. The Buster had an active and enterprising nature, and Ronald and he were ingenious in finding scope for their energies. Once or twice they roused a skunk, and then Ronnie came home with his clothes smelling so awfully that they had to be burned and he himself fumigated; all which made work for his mother and Carita.

Pepperbox Flat was an ugly name for a beautiful little park, surrounded by gently sloping hills, backed up by high mountains, which were covered half-way with forest. The dark sombre green of the pitch pines was varied by their red-brown trunks, and relieved in the more sheltered nooks by the lovely silver fir. Grotesquely formed limestone rocks stood

in groups here and there, contrasting with bright red sandstone ; the latter glorious in the light of the rising or setting sun, whilst the weird white stones stood out wondrously in the moonlight. And all this beauty lay under a sky which is only overclouded about forty days out of the three hundred and sixty-five. The soil would be very arid and barren were it not for the innumerable streams and the indispensable irrigating ditches, from which the farmers can turn on the water, rich with vegetable matter and the mineral deposits of the mountains, over their fields at pleasure ; although it was aggravating to have young rogues like the Buster meddling with one's farming arrangements so effectually.

Mr. Gervase Heath, the owner, had been in business in Liverpool ; but health had failed him there, and having heard much of the wonderfully recuperative influences of this mountain air, and the healing properties inhaled with the odours of pitch-pine forests, he sold his business, only realizing enough to buy this moderate-sized farm, after paying for the family outfit and passage, and providing for the first two years. It was what is called an improved farm ; that is, it was mostly fenced in, roughly ; and on it stood a good-sized log cabin, built by the former

proprietor, who had found farming at such a distance from the markets too slow, and so had betaken himself to mining up at Rosita. It was a long way to take the corn, the butter, and the chickens up to Rosita, or down to Cañon City, and even to San Juan; but soon the little narrow-gauge mountain railroads would be winding up near them, and transit would be easier.

Mr. Heath and his boys knew nothing of farming except what they tried to learn from books, and as these were English ones, they blundered much for many years, during which they lived from hand to mouth, trying to apply Old-country methods to the soil and the climate of the Western world. Also, not being so smart and keen-witted as their neighbours, they were constantly under-rated in their sales and worsted in their "swoppings"—a primitive form of dealing in regions where money is scarce if Nature is bountiful. No great harm came to them, however; they gained health and learned self-denial and endurance, and by-and-by will make money. They still live on Pepperbox Flat, a happy united family; only Joyce, the eldest daughter, has a home of her own, of which we shall tell hereafter.

Ellen never took to the Heaths. She called them

"high-toned," chiefly because they had family prayers every morning before separating to work, and in the evenings the father and daughter read aloud from Shakespeare, Tennyson, or Dickens ; whilst the good mother stitched away, and the boys made knick-knacks for the cabin, mended their shoes, sewed on their buttons, and even knitted socks—accomplishments they had learned with much pains and patience, and for which they were heartily despised by the Warner boys.

Mrs. Warner was fond of going to church. It was at San Juan an occasion for putting on her better garments, for studying at one's leisure the latest bonnet from Denver, and borrowing ideas generally. She felt it also to be very respectable to make an appearance in public at regular intervals with her husband and her boys ; and was thankful that Stephen had the decency to prefer going to Divine service, instead of sitting on his veranda on the day of rest, like Judge Lynchem, with his feet against a post at a higher level than his head, his chair tilted back against the house, a cigar in his mouth, and the *Colorado Chieftain* in his hands.

Up at Elk Lodge she missed the public religious observances much, and was quite scandalized

when Mrs. Heath said that she considered daily family worship and united prayer in the home of even more importance than the Sunday services ; looking on these latter as a privilege, so to speak, which one missed greatly, but had to leave behind with other advantages of more settled neighbourhoods. And yet she was neither a Quakeress nor a Plymouth Sister, but a very good English Churchwoman. Mrs. Warner could not understand such ideas, and so summed them up under the term "high-toned."

Often, though, on a warm summer evening, Carita would wander down to listen to the singing of the boys with Joyce and little Dorothy. Sometimes they practised glees, the father directing them ; but it was the beautiful hymns touched her most. Some of them Carita had learned with Mr. Grahame ; others, new and popular ones, such as "Scatter seeds of kindness" and "Go bury thy sorrow," were new to her, and later on came back to her with comfort in many an hour of loneliness and pain. Joyce found her outside listening one evening, and asked her to come and join them as often as she could, which the girl did whenever it was possible to do so without irritating Mrs. Warner.

"What makes you so thoughtful and quiet to-night, Steeve?" asked Eleanor, as they sat outside the cabin one evening late in September.

"I guess father's pretty well played out, mother," said Tom; "he's been so busy in the harvest."

It was not a heavy one; only grass, and some oats for winter feed, with a small crop of maize. Stephen's mountain ranch was not suited to any extensive raising of stock for the market.

"It's time you boys were on the roost—off with you! I want to talk alone with mother," said their father.

"I had a letter from Sam Johnson to-day, Eleanor," he continued, when the lads had gone—"Johnson who spent a few months with us at Santa Anna, you know."

"And who married the rich young Californian widow—lucky man!" added Eleanor.

"Yes; he has been settled in San Francisco ever since, and is director of ever so many prosperous companies. He knows I have been unsettled the last year or two, and he writes to ask if I will go down to the Maitailoa Islands, in the interests of his latest hobby, the 'Polynesian Land Company.' He knows I have nothing to invest, but says that if I will undertake this business I shall be handsomely paid,

and have a chance of making something for myself as well."

"What is the object of the company, Steeve?"

"To buy up land cheaply from the natives, and to sell it in parcels for coffee and cotton plantations."

"And how far is it to these islands, Steeve? I never heard of them before."

"Anything between four and seven weeks' sail from San Francisco, Nell."

"Oh, how dreadful! Nearly four months to be spent in going and coming, besides the stay there."

"That might only be for a couple of months, and the thing might lead to something better, Nell. In San Francisco I might find a purchaser for this farm, and go into some business there with the money. I ought to get a good sum for it now."

The idea of living once more in a city was very tempting to Eleanor. She had hankered after more society, the delights of shopping, gay crowded streets, and rounds of visits, ever since she left New York, a girl of eighteen.

A week later Stephen was on his way towards San Francisco. Carita and the boys accompanied him as far as Rattlesnake Bar, seven miles down the foothills, where the plains begin.

"You have always been like my own daughter, Carita," said Stephen, as he bade her good-bye. "I know you will look after the boys well, and not let them worry mother too much. She never has been very strong, you know, and if she is a little impatient sometimes, bear with it, child, and promise me not to leave her till I get home again?"

"Leave her, father? Where should I go to? I shall never leave you all."

"I think you will, some day, Carrie," he said. "You are a woman now; some one will want to rob us of you by-and-by."

Her heart was too full to allow her to answer. He took her in his arms and kissed her, with the tender, loving kiss of a father; kissed his boys, and then rode off at a gallop.

Poor Carita! She suffered more than any one of them in parting with the man who had shown her such unwavering loving-kindness—more even than did his wife, although Eleanor stayed in bed, bemoaning herself for two nights and a day, saying how hard her lot always was, with a husband who could be so little in his own home.

Carita had to cook the boys' supper and do some housework after they got back, and it was late

before she was able to run across the park and down to the creek, beside which was the bower of trailing arbutus which was her oratory, her sanctum, and her refuge, when Mrs. Warner was more than ordinarily exacting and unreasonable.

When all were in bed, she slipped out barefooted into the starlit night, and sobbed until she was exhausted. Six months at least! How long it seemed! and the dangerous ocean to cross, too! Suppose he should never come back! She had read of many a shipwreck and fire, or foundering at sea. A heavy weight of sorrow and presentiment of trouble to come pressed on her lonely young heart.

"O God! keep father safe, and help me to do my duty and to keep strong until he comes home again!" she prayed over and over again.

At last she felt very chilly, crept up the hillside again, and was soon in her bed, sleeping the heavy sleep which comes in youth to those who are tired with long weeping.

Mr. Heath had promised Stephen that he would go up to Elk Lodge often, to see that all went on well. Mrs. Heath, too, would have been as a sister to Eleanor, but she was always repulsed by her coldness.

Happily for all, it was a very busy time. Much had to be done in the way of pickling and preserving, and the warmer clothing to be got ready for the winter, so Carita had her hands full. Every morning, early, the young "bosses"—heifers and steers—came trotting up to the back of the Lodge to get some extra feed from the hands of Eleanor or herself. The heifers would be saved for dairy purposes, the steers sent down to San Juan to be sold in the spring. Then the little crop of fine red tomatoes had to be sliced and laid in jars, each layer covered with brown sugar, for winter use. The wild yellow plums and purple grapes, that grew lower down on the plain beside the river, must be gathered in, and made into jam in the great boiler. The boys had no time for lessons. They had to ride round the ranch after the cattle, to see where the fences needed repairing, and do other little jobs—Sam Morris being extra busy with a couple of strangers hired to help in the harvest. The vegetable garden was half a mile away, and it had to be visited every day, for they seldom tasted fresh animal food at Elk Lodge. It was not worth while killing, they thought, for their own use. The men and boys brought down a few red squirrels, poor little things, and sometimes some

fine trout ; but this summer the "hoppers," the pest of Western farmers, had been very plentiful, and the fish were so overfed with those which dropped into the stream, that no bait would tempt them to bite. When Stephen was at home, and not too busy, he would bring down larger game and plenty of the delicious prairie chickens. The Rocky Mountain air is very "feeding," however, and salt pork and beans could always be had ; and a very good dish it is, too, when properly cooked.

About three weeks after Mr. Warner's departure, Joyce Heath came up to see Carita, in order to arrange for a picnic to gather in the wild grapes.

"Father came past Seven-by-Nine Creek last night, Mrs. Warner," she said, "and he says there are great quantities there, just ready for picking. He will let me have the mule-wagon, and I can bring it up for you and Carita. The boys will prefer to ride, no doubt."

"I would rather not go, Joyce. I must write to Mr. Warner, and I shall be glad of a quiet day at home. Jack Wilson, from San Juan, has come up for a few days. I wish he had stayed at home, for he does Tom no good."

"We must take him with us, then, and keep him

out of mischief for one day, at any rate," said Joyce cheerily, as she went out to the corral, where Carita was chopping wood for the kitchen stove.

It was nine miles down the foothills and across the scattered settlement of Rattlesnake Bar to Seven-by-Nine Creek, where the vines hung in luxuriant festoons from the tall cotton-wood trees.

The breakfast things were just out of the way next morning when Joyce appeared with the wagon. She looked very sweet and bonny; her face was soft and pure in its outlines, and her eyes were of a deep blue, true and steadfast-looking. Her figure, tall and slender—she was just nineteen years old, but physically less developed than our Mexican maiden—looked well in the short home-made dress of dark blue serge; and her Saxon complexion, of which the mother was rather proud, was protected by a huge shaker bonnet of some cotton material, which would have been very trying to harder features and duller eyes. Carita, with her brunette skin, lit up by those lustrous dark eyes, so liquid and speaking—her small, compact figure shown to advantage by the well-fitting dress of striped cotton, a wide-brimmed hat on her head—formed a pleasant contrast to Joyce, as the two sat side by side on the front seat. Behind them,

in the bottom of the wagon, were Ronald and Dorothy Heath, amongst the baskets and pails—which were to come back filled with the pretty clusters of purple fruit—the camp kettle, great coffee-pot, and frying-pan for the hot cakes; as our Western folks all despise stale bread.

“Picking grapes with the girls was awful slow,” Jack and Tom agreed; but some other fun might turn up, and both lads had their six-shooters with them in case any small game came in their way.

“Don’t shoot the dear little black squirrels,” pleaded tender-hearted Dorothy.

“Not if we can hit a few bully red ones,” was all the concession Jack would make.

“You ate a good lot of that pie up at our place yesterday,” said Tom.

“But I didn’t know it was made of squirrels, Tom, or I would never have touched it. I thought it was chicken pie.”

“Catch them giving us chickens at our place,” cried Alick. “They’re getting awful stingy, keeping them all to sell up at Rosita.”

“To get more money for you boys,” said Carita.

It took nearly three hours to get to Seven-by-Nine Creek, there were so many holes in the road, and the

mules went down the steep hill sidings very slowly and carefully. The four boys rode on ahead. When the girls arrived at the cotton-wood copse which fringed the creek, they found Alick and Ben Heath making the camp fire, in anticipation of lunch-time, at the appointed place of meeting.

"Where are Tom and Jack?" asked Carita.

"They're ridden over towards Pancake Ravine. They said they'd be back here by the time you came."

"How vexing! I wanted Tom to help us, and I fear Jack will lead him into some mischief or other. I hate to have him with our boys," she added to Joyce; "he never does come when father's at home. They say he's one of the lowest boys in San Juan."

"They may be back soon, Carrie; they will be getting hungry, and I dare say they found it slow waiting for us."

The two children were longing for lunch. It was already noon, and not worth while beginning to pick the grapes until their repast was over. Ronald and Dorothy laid out the things, whilst the elder ones made the coffee and cooked pancakes.

Their lunching place was close to the road. Just as they were beginning to eat, a stranger rode by, then

turned as the sound of their merry voices reached his ear, hitched his horse's bridle up to a tree, and came towards them.

He was a man apparently of about five-and-twenty, tall, well-made, and, as Joyce saw at once, though I could scarcely tell you why, an Englishman ; notwithstanding the fact that he was dressed exactly like any ranchman, in rough flannel shirt, high boots pulled over his trousers, leathern belt, with knife and revolver, and wide-brimmed felt hat, which he took off his head courteously to the girls, as he asked,—

“ Will you have the goodness to tell me which of the three tracks close by leads to Pepperbox Flat ? ”

“ The centre one, ’ said Joyce. “ You will come to Rattlesnake Bar first, however, and must ask the way again there.”

“ What does he want at our place ? ” she wondered within herself.

“ That’s where we live, ” put in frank Ben. “ Are you going to see father ? ”

“ I am going to Mr. Gervase Heath’s. Is he your father ? ”

The idea of a home with two such pleasant-looking girls in it was evidently agreeable to him.

“ Of course he is, and this is Joyce, our eldest

sister ; Joy, we call her. She'll give you some coffee if you like."

"I shall be delighted to join this nice little party, if I may," said the man. "Do you know, my father and yours were schoolfellows at Rugby, so we ought not to be altogether strangers in these wild parts. See, here is a letter of introduction I am taking to him from Mr. Milward, of Liverpool."

"Oh, he is a very dear old friend of ours," said Joyce, becoming a little less embarrassed.

"And my name is Philip Emerson. I hail last from Wet Mountain Valley."

"Do sit down and take some luncheon with us," said Carita, smiling a welcome as she made room for him between Joyce and herself.

Joyce felt shy of this tall, handsome Englishman. She was, like many Old-country girls, accustomed to think it the proper thing to be distant and reserved with the opposite sex. Besides, her more practised eye told her that this was a man who, in England, would be ranked in a somewhat higher class than their own ; or, at any rate, that he was more a man of the world than was her father or her eldest brother, Harold.

Carita, essentially a child of the West, knew no-

thing of these fine distinctions of class. In her eyes, Stephen Warner was the highest type of a gentleman, to whom no other man could be even equal. She had never been taught that any different attitude ought to be observed towards a man than towards a woman ; in fact, home experience had led her to expect more kindness and consideration from the former than from the latter. She always felt at liberty to be more her own natural self with the male sex, no ill specimens of which had been allowed to come closely in contact with the Warner family. So she was very frank and gracious towards Philip Emerson, and made him feel not only welcome but happy.

"The long ride from Lazy Man's Cañon has made me feel very hungry," he said, gaily. "I slept there last night."

"And old Pete Brown wouldn't give you much breakfast, I know," rejoined Carita. "We know his ways ; it is the usual resting-place between this and San Juan."

"I say, Carrie, you'll have to make some more pancakes," said Alick, in a loud whisper, alarmed at their guest's appetite.

"Let me help you," he cried, jumping up ; "I

know how to make first-rate slapjacks. I was head cook and bottle-washer at our cabin in Wet Mountain Valley."

Joyce protested, but the young man insisted, and went off with Carita to the fire, which he stirred up, and then he held the pan ready for the mixed batter.

"Were you long in Wet Mountain Valley?" she asked.

"Nearly two years, during which time I have managed to lose all my money, and now, like the younger son in the Gospel, I am on my way to your father to ask him to let me be his hired servant."

"Mr. Heath is not my father," said Carita.

"I thought you were two sisters!" Philip felt disappointed, finding this frank girl with the warm brunette tint and large dark eyes the more attractive of the two girls.

"No; we are friends and near neighbours. I live at Elk Ranch, farther up the mountains."

"And may I ask what your name is?"

"Carita," she said, simply. Then, actually for the first time in her life, she felt embarrassed by the fact that she knew only of one name that she could lay claim to as her own, and the thought troubled her, so

that her face grew pale for a moment, and her brown little hands trembled.

But Phil did not notice it; he thought it was a part of the girl's natural simplicity and her probably unconventional training that made her only tell him her Christian name, and he liked her the better for it.

"Carita!" he repeated. "What a pretty name!"

His words brought back the warm colour to her cheeks.

"Joyce is a nice name, too, is it not?" she said.

"Very. Joy and Carita," he repeated. A good omen, he thought, for a fellow to be welcomed and fed by maidens with such names when he is just making a fresh start in the world. This one is evidently of Southern blood, hence the name. What can her parents be?

He had seen no girls with whom he had cared to be on a friendly and social equality since he left England. Joyce Heath reminded him of his only sister, who had been the comforter of his boyhood. And Carita? She reminded him of nothing he had ever seen or known before. His pulses quickened and his heart was stirred by her innocent, loving eyes and sympathetic voice. What would the clasp of those warm little fingers be like? he wondered. He

was inclined to think the lines were falling to him in pleasant places, and felt more anxious than before to be a hired man on Pepperbox Flat.

Another traveller had joined the party whilst Carita and Philip were busy with the cakes.

"Professor Moggs, Mr. Emerson," said Joyce, her eyes full of quiet fun as she watched the effect produced on the latter by the new-comer's appearance, and noted the comprehensive glance with which Philip took in the tattered old military cloak of faded blue, the trousers hanging in rags about the Professor's ankles, the old Panama hat tied on with pieces of dirty white tape, and the general unkemptness of the man, who, however, looked not in the least conscious of his own odd appearance.

"Proud to make your acquaintance, sir," he said, with a grand bow. "Wal, Miss Carita, and how's all the family up to Elk Lodge? 'Most lost without your pap-pa, ain't you? And how long is he to be on the rove this time?"

"What is your learned friend professor of, Miss Heath?" asked Philip, whilst Mr. Moggs interviewed Carita.

"Of bumpology. His talents are much appreciated in this region, I can assure you. How have you been

getting on, Professor, since we saw you last?" she asked, wishing to draw him out for Philip's benefit.

"Mortal slow, Miss Joyce. What with the hoppers amongst our small crops, and the new mining camp up to Tin Cup Gulch, which is drawing all our boys yonder, it's been pretty nigh Starvation Camp up to Chucklehead Digging this summer. I'm on the track now for Cañon City to see if there's mebbe an opening there for a lecture or two."

After eating up nearly the whole of the fresh batch of pancakes, the Professor turned his mug upside down to show that he had completed his repast, saying,—

"Wal, young ladies, I guess I've made a good square meal, and I'll make tracks again now. Give my respects to your mammah, Alick, and tell her I'll be giving her a call soon. She'll be wanting me to look over her young gents' heads again to see how their organs is developing. Combativeness larger than ever in Tom, I reckon. I don't see him here to-day. He's a fine lad, but I met him over to Chicken Thief Flat a day or two ago with a boy I've often seen foolin' round the saloons to San Juan. He's a bad lot that Wilson boy, Miss Carita; don't have him up to Elk Ranch more than you can help. Acquisitiveness, especially in the matter of puddin'

and candy, large in Alick there ; we must encourage the growth of conscientiousness, to counterbalance it. Ideality and veneration strong in that little miss," pointing to Dorothy, who was gazing at him with large wondering eyes.

Joyce Heath did not like Professor Moggs ; she thought him a great humbug—a windbag, in fact—and his dialect irritated her.

"I am glad he has gone," she said, when the sound of his horse's hoofs was no longer audible ; "he has taken up so much of our time."

"Not to speak of all those pancakes," added Alick, ruefully.

"If we are not quick we shall gather very little fruit before it is dark," said Carita. "Hurry up, children ; you have eaten quite enough."

The moon was at its full, though, as Philip reminded the two girls ; so that they need not fear being overtaken by darkness.

All set to in earnest in filling the baskets and pails. The young man made himself most useful in reaching down the highest bunches. He found being perched up in a cotton-wood tree, and looking down on two such pretty faces upturned towards his own, with arms and hands extended to catch the purple

grapes from his, a most charming position. Carita had twined a wreath of columbine round her wide-brimmed hat, and Joyce had thrown aside the ugly sun-bonnet as superfluous under the shades of the vines. Emerson's horse, tied to a tree by his lariat, was feeding near by. It was the happiest day the man had had for a long time, he thought, and he behaved like a school-boy, winning them all by his merry ways.

"I hope you will settle down somewhere near us," said Ben, looking admiringly at his bearded face and strong, helpful hands; "but I say, father's just awfully poor: he can't afford any hired man."

"Who said Mr. Emerson wanted to be a hired man, silly boy?" asked Joyce.

"He said so himself," said Alick; "I heard him tell our Carita he wanted to."

"Then I'll come and work for nothing, Ben, if father will have me."

"And you can sleep out in the tent with us boys, you know. We've got an odd bearskin."

"Oh, I'll soon fetch over my traps if your father will have me, Ben."

Joyce could not imagine the new friend as a hired man, and took it only as a joke.

"Oh dear, how can I have forgotten Tom and Jack Wilson all the afternoon!" said Carita, when they were making some tea, preparatory to starting on the slow ride up the mountains. "Why do they not come back? I feel very uneasy, Joy. What will Mrs. Warner say if we go back without them?"

"I think you are generally more anxious than she is about them, Carrie."

"Perhaps I am, but you see to-day they were in my charge, which makes all the difference."

Philip heard the girls as they discussed the probable destination of the boys.

"I met a party of cowboys about six miles from this," he said, "and there were two lads with them. I remember thinking they looked too young for the company they were in."

"Oh dear!" cried Carita, "surely they have not ridden over to Git-up-and-git! I heard Jack tell Tom last night that the round-up was to be there to-night."

"You bet they have," said Alick. "Tom has been wild to go on the round-up all summer, but father would not let him, and this is the last, you know."

"Don't worry about them," said Philip; "if Mr. Heath will give me a shake-down to-night, I will

hunt them up for you to-morrow. We may find them at home, after all."

It seemed to the man as though he would like to begin a new life in this purer moral atmosphere. It had been rather a wild and reckless one amongst his countrymen at Wet Mountain Valley. Many of them were there because they had failed to do well in England, and their friends foolishly thought they might do better away from home influences. He could not begin this new life more pleasantly or better, he thought, that by an act of service for the girl who attracted him so much by her bright, loving ways. He had already contrived to draw from little Dorothy some information about Carita, and knew that she was only an adopted daughter in her home. A hard time of it she had, no doubt, with these boys, still she did not seem very miserable, and she looked as though some one had cared for her, was the conclusion Philip arrived at.

The still evening air resounded with merry laughter, as the mule-wagon jolted in and out of the holes up the mountain track, under the bright harvest moon; Phil Emerson riding closely beside them, under pretence of protecting the girls from any stray rough that might be coming down from Rosita.

CHAPTER V.
THE ROUND-UP.

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ALAS for Philip's castles in the air! They were quickly dispelled by Gervase Heath, who, although he gave the stranger a warm welcome, as the son of an old schoolfellow whom he remembered well, soon made Philip understand that he was not in any need of his services, Harold and Will doing all he needed. He advised Philip strongly to hire himself out to a smart American of capital who had lately bought a large ranch for stock-raising in El Paso county, about fifty miles away.

"It is a far more profitable business than farming," he added, "and more suited to an unmarried man."

"That handsome face might disturb my little Joy's peace of mind, wife," he said, when the family had separated for the night. "I don't know what I should do if he robbed me of my little maid."

Carita lay sleepless on her bed that night for hours.

She was uneasy about Tom. Eleanor had grown very tired sitting up for them later than usual, and having felt lonely through the day, was irritable, and blamed her much for allowing the boys to ride out of her sight—most unreasonably, considering the little authority she herself exercised over them. Carita had still the old dread of Jack, although he was three years younger than herself. He was the only one ever likely to bring up against her that sad little episode connected with her childhood. Several times, when she had tried to prevent his doing what was wrong, he had made a sign with his generally dirty fingers round his throat, and a significant grimace ; or had asked unfeelingly, “Do you remember the locket, Candy?”—not Carrie, but the old name he would then use, which was associated with so much shame and unhappiness. She was still afraid of the boy, and could not bear to see Tom in his society.

When at last she fell asleep it was to dream a strange jumble of dreams. The father came and asked her why she had let Tom go on the round-up. Then she and the new friend of yesterday were talking pleasantly together, and suddenly Jack’s evil face was thrust in between them. Again, she thought the stranger was surprised because she had only one

name, and that he said he would give her another. And just as he was telling her what it should be, Jack appeared again, and said, "Why, she's Candalaria, a little Greaser from Santa Anna." And then Mr. Emerson left her and went to Joy, and they both turned their backs on her, and left her sitting alone by the creek, and the waters rose higher and higher, as she sat there unable to move. It was a wretched night, and she was glad when day came and Eleanor's voice sounded in her ears, bidding her get up quickly, as it was late.

And how had it fared with Phil Emerson? He slept, as boys say, "like a top," out in the tent under the bearskin, and dreamed of nobody.

Next morning, having gladly accepted Mrs. Heath's invitation to spend a week at Pepperbox Flat, he and Ben went up to the Warners to see if Tom had come home.

Carita received him somewhat shyly. It was quite a new thing for her to feel as she did; but dreams are apt, as we all know, to leave an odd impression on the mind until one has slept them off again. Mrs. Warner had not heard of this new acquaintance. Alick and Ronnie had been too busy with their breakfast to talk much, and the previous night their

mother had been too sleepy to do more than ask where Tom was. So she looked very much surprised when this fine-looking stranger greeted Carita as though he had known her some time ; and on his being introduced to her as an Englishman who was staying at Mr. Heath's, she was coldly civil. "High-toned, no doubt, like the rest of them," was her inward comment at first ; but by degrees his frank, courteous manners, and evident desire to please, propitiated her, and she gladly accepted his offer to hunt up Tom.

On the evening of the same day Philip came upon the runaways, many miles away, at Turkey Creek. The sun was setting gloriously, as one sees it only on the wide plains or at sea ; the wild chase of the day was over, and Master Tom was eating a capital dinner with "Captain Charlie."

No wonder all the youngsters were wild to go on the round-up. Nothing more exciting can be imagined than the scene which the plains present at sunset when the men are riding in from every direction, all making for one point, driving the cattle before them to the place appointed by their captain. There is always a captain chosen for each "outfit," for "bunching" them—that is, gathering them to-

gether, so that each ranchman can select his own according to their brand. They are then given in charge of their respective herders—"cow-punchers" they are called; the horses are hobbled and turned away to feed during the night, and the stockmen, after washing and dining, amuse themselves as they best can—smoking, spinning yarns, playing with cards, chiefly poker, and even dancing with each other.

Jack Wilson was already deep in a game of poker; but Captain Charlie, who knew Mr. Warner, had prevented Tom from joining in, and kept him at his side, not wishing to see the lad corrupted if he could prevent it.

Tom's face fell as he read the note which his mother had sent by Philip.

"What's up, boy?" asked the captain. Tom hated to tell him that his mother had sent to say that he must come home at once. It made him seem so very small.

Phil's kindly nature divined the lad's sensations; besides, he wanted to make friends with him, associated as he was in his mind with Carita. He used tact, therefore, and earned Tom's lasting goodwill by putting in quickly,—

"I am staying near to the Warners' place for a week, and I want Tom to run round with me a little; the men are all busy in the harvest."

"Wal, sir, you can eat a bit of dinner with us, I guess; it's hungry work riding all day, and I reckon you'd best camp with us here to-night; it's a matter of thirty miles or more from this to Elk Ranch."

"I wish I could have seen a bit more of the fun," said Tom, ruefully, as the two rode away next morning, just when the stockmen were starting out for the day.

"Never mind, my boy; I'll ask your mother to let you go on the round-up with me next April; there will be a better muster then."

Jack Wilson did not return with them; the fascinations of the round-up were too strong for him, and as his parents believed him safe up at Elk Ranch, he felt that he could enjoy forbidden pleasures without fear.

Not long, however; for the same afternoon the mail boy, who passed close to the ranch daily, on his fast little bronco, brought a letter from Mrs. Wilson to Eleanor. She had heard of Mr. Warner's long journey, and wrote, urging his wife to come

back with Jack on Saturday, to spend a week with her at San Juan.

This was on Thursday. Tom seized on the opportunity to get two more days on the plains, and begged to be allowed to hunt Jack up.

"No, indeed," said his mother; "it is well that his parents should know how little he can be trusted. I shall be surprised if that boy does not die miserably in his boots, some day. I shall go to San Juan on Saturday; you will drive me down in the ambulance. I wanted some flannels and new pants for you boys, and shall be glad to do all I can in the city before winter sets in."

CHAPTER VI.

“ON SUNDAY HEAVEN’S GATE STANDS
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I NEED not tell you that the sun rose brightly on that Sunday morning when Mrs. Warner was away, down at San Juan. It very seldom does anything else in the beautiful climate of Colorado. Some will tell you, as they did me, that the name of the State is derived from the vivid colouring of its mountains, the red heights of the Sangre de Cristo range, the bright blue of its skies, and its wonderful flora. That is only partially correct, however ; it was first named Coronado by the band of Spanish explorers who came up from Mexico, in 1540, under a captain of that name. They carried back a glowing report of “a sunny land,” of high mountains and beautiful vegetation, where barbarians lived who had plenty of beans, cloth, gold, silver, and precious stones. The change from Coronado to Colorado was an easy and natural one.

Carita awoke early, with a sense of freedom and pleasure at the thought of this Sunday, which was very natural. It would be easy to keep Alick and Ronnie near her all day; there would be very little work to do, and they would take a pleasant book down into the cañon, through which the stream ran. Perhaps—and the thought sent a warm feeling through her—Mrs. Heath would know they were alone, and would ask them down to supper, the meal Western farmers make about sunset or even earlier; and then it would be delightful to sing together, and to hear Mr. Heath and Joyce read from those nice books of theirs.

She put on a pretty dress of a soft creamy tint, brightened here and there with bits of crimson-coloured ribbon, which suited her clear brown skin and dark hair perfectly. In her hair, which was twisted round her shapely head in a thick coil, she fixed a cluster of bright crimson berries and leaves, such as she knew would keep fresh-looking all through the day. If Mrs. Warner had been at home, she would have scolded her for dressing herself "prinking," as they say, so early in the day; but no one was at hand to put a damper on our Mexican maiden's natural sense of what was becoming and

fitting on a lovely, fresh Sunday morning, with God's own bright world of beauty above and around.

Alick and Ronald were also dressed in their best, and they made a very pleasant picture as they sat having breakfast at a little table in the large dining-room instead of the kitchen, as it was Sunday. A very attractive table it looked to Philip Emerson, who came in with Joyce Heath and one of her brothers just as they were finishing.

"We met Mrs. Warner, Carita, as she was going down the mountain, yesterday," said Joyce; "she told us she was on her way to San Juan, so we knew you would be alone to-day, and mother says she will be very pleased if you will all three spend the day with us."

"Oh, how kind of her!" cried Carita; "I shall like it so very much."

Her cheek flushed, and her bright eyes sparkled with pleasure.

Philip looked pleased also. The pretty dress and bright berries were not lost on him, nor were they on Joyce, who said,—

"I see you are already dressed for the day; you look very charming, too. You American girls are cleverer with your dress than we English—at least,

you have much more taste, as a rule. Come back with us now ; you will be in time for our morning prayers, which are generally rather longer on Sundays than on other days. I know you will not mind that. And we will try over some new music, just out from home."

"Do you sing, Mr. Emerson?"

"Not much, but I like to hear other people."

"You sing very well," said Joyce ; "I heard you with the boys in the tent last night."

"Those were carnal songs, Miss Heath. I fear I shall shock you when I say that I have not sung a hymn or been to church or assisted at family prayers since I came to this country, two years ago."

Observing that Carita looked sorry, as though his words, uttered lightly, hurt her, he added,—

"I shall be very glad to be one of your little congregation this morning, and will promise to be an attentive scholar if you will teach me your hymns. Come on, Alick ; you don't want those things to-day," he said, laughing.

Alick was stowing all manner of properties into the pockets of his best pants : a string of rattles—relics of the numerous rattlesnakes they had shot on the plains, or chopped in two as they lay asleep amongst

the firewood—a beaver's paw, a small disabled pocket pistol, a huge jack-knife, string, and piles of molasses candy, all of which he intended to finger during prayers, and to exhibit for the envy and admiration of Ben Heath.

The cabin on Pepperbox Flat was not nearly so commodious or well furnished as Elk Lodge. It consisted of a living-room, not very large; a "lean-to" kitchen, only big enough to contain the large American stove and to do the plain cooking in; two small bedrooms—one for Mr. and Mrs. Heath, and the other for Joyce and little Dorothy. The three brothers slept, as I said before, in a tent outside. When it became too cold for them there, they took to the "dug-out" on the hillside near at hand.

There were only three chairs in the old cabin; the other seats were benches made by the boys, and the family boxes covered with strong striped ticking. A rude but comfortable couch was covered with beaver's skin; and yet, although less furnished than Mrs. Warner's sitting-room, their little room looked more homelike, for Mrs. Heath and Joyce both had that knack—so useful in women, and especially in those who are destined to be "dwellers in tents," figuratively speaking—of brightening every nook in which they

tarried, putting their own sweet individual impress on a room by the arrangement of all within it—a faculty which is a natural gift, and seldom if ever learned. Pretty little creeping plants grew out of baskets made of pine-cones hung in the windows, and trailed over the rude window frames, making curtains in the summer unnecessary. Brightly coloured prints of good taste, in frames of rough wood, covered with lichens, grey, red, orange, and brown, were on the wall, with two really good old family pictures. The broad mantel-shelf was covered with ticking, worked over effectively in gay worsteds. Over the great log fireplace was slung a large black gipsy kettle.

On Sunday morning Mr. Heath made it a rule to read some short lecture or sermon; he used Dr. Vaughan's book of family prayers; and there was as much singing as the young folks felt inclined for. I hope none of my readers will think this was a very goody-goody family, when I say that they all enjoyed these little services.

The secret of this, perhaps, lay in the fact that their father was a wise man, who believed, like the old Scotchman, that "where weariness begins edification ends"; and so everything he chose was short and interesting, and, like the great and often-quoted John

Wesley from his dinner, they got up wanting—or at any rate able for—more. Their religious sympathies were cultivated and wide, as their favourite Sunday morning books showed. Quaint old Thomas Fuller's "Holy and Profane State," Rev. Frederick W. Robertson's and Dr. Vaughan's sermons, Dr. Raleigh's "Quiet Resting-Places," and Dean Goulburn's "Thoughts on Personal Religion," were those they used most. Dorothy and Ben were too young to understand them much, but if they chose they might take up any other book, quietly, whilst the reading went on. After eleven they strolled about as they pleased.

Philip Emerson felt lifted into a purer and better region as he sat in the cheery room, listening to Mr. Heath; though eyes and thoughts went often wandering to the sweet women's faces opposite to him. Remember, he had lived only amongst wild young men for two years, and these faces preached good things to him as much as the author they read. It seemed to him a very appropriate lecture, too; it was on "Angel Help" from "Quiet Resting-Places"; the text, "And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him." I cannot tell you all the thoughts that crowded into the man's mind during one short half-hour; but they were wholesome, though some-

times painful ; and some that were altogether new to him found a home in his heart for ever.

In character he was, perhaps, more like Esau than Jacob, but he was a mixture of the two ; and just now, like the latter, he was seeking a resting-place. There had been little sympathy between his father—who was a stern, hard man—and himself. His only brother was preferred before him in all things ; and his proud, rebellious spirit had urged him on until he had incurred the father's anger more seriously than ever. There had been a bitter scene ; then, like the son in the Gospel, he had demanded a sum of money, the last he would ever ask for, and had come away to waste it in extravagances and poor farming.

He had, like Jacob, an affectionate heart and a tender mother, towards whom he often looked back with longing thoughts. He knew that she grieved over him, and her prayers always followed him, so that he had not been able to be reckless and foolish without some misgivings. Just now he felt ready to go into any hard service, if only he might win the love of such a woman as either of the two before him. Down amongst the vines dark-eyed Carita had seemed the more attractive ; here, in the house, the English girl's soft, musical voice and eyes, which seemed "homes

of silent prayer," exerted a very strong influence over the wanderer.

"Joy always reads to us a little on Sunday afternoons, Mr. Emerson," said Dorothy. "Would you like to listen to her?"

"I would like nothing better," answered Philip. He let Harold and John Heath stroll down towards Rattlesnake Bar, to call on a young settler, and settled himself comfortably beside the girls and the two boys on a mossy bank, near enough to the stream for it to make a pleasant and gentle accompaniment to Joy's voice.

"What books have you got, Dorothy?" asked Carita.

"'The Sunday Magazine' and 'Pilgrim's Progress,'" she replied. "We will have whichever Mr. Emerson thinks he would like best."

"It had better be the 'Pilgrim's Progress' to-day for my edification," said Phil.

"We have read the first part, haven't we, Joy? Do you know all about that, Mr. Emerson?"

"Only too well, Dorothy: the City of Destruction and the Slough of Despond particularly well. I should like to hear about the House Beautiful and the Delectable Mountains this afternoon."

Joy and Carita read by turns, until the lengthening shadows told them it was time to go up to the cabin to their evening meal, which was tea and supper combined.

The evening was spent chiefly in singing, John leading on a very sweet and good English concertina, a capital instrument in a small room, when skilfully managed. The whole family were what the Americans call "enthused" for music, and Philip turned out an apt pupil, having a good ear and a strong, rich, baritone voice.

It was a bright, happy Sunday, and in Carita's, as well as Philip Emerson's calendar, a red-letter day, towards which each looked back often on many drearier and lonelier days, which were in store for both during the long winter before them.

On Tuesday morning, early, Philip started off for El Paso county, to see what arrangements he could make with the great stockman of whom Mr. Heath had spoken. He carried away with him the goodwill of all these new acquaintances, and an invitation from the mother to come over and see them once more before the snow-falls made the mountains less accessible.

Joyce and Carita both went about their work during the next few days with a sense of something

added to their life. A fuller, sweeter meaning had come, for them, into the morning skies, the shimmering moonlight, the sighing of the wind through the needles of the pines. By-and-by all this must turn to pain for one of the two, perhaps for both.

For the present both were happier, although neither could have given any particular reason for being so. Carita had four more days of comparative leisure, and she enjoyed them thoroughly : singing, and dreaming in the flowery gulch behind the cabin, whilst Alick was with Sam Morris. Ronald, who was quite satisfied if Carita was near him, occupied himself in constructing miniature irrigating canals and ditches to his heart's content.

Carita's subjective mood suited the boy exactly. When she reminded him on Friday evening that mother and Tom would be back next day, he heaved a big sigh, and said,—

"I wish they'd stop away a good bit longer ; you and me get on better without them, and I haven't half finished the canal to Beaver Brook."

And Carita had not read half as much as she wanted in the poets of whom Phil and Joy had talked and which she had borrowed from her friend ; so she echoed Ronnie's sigh, and gave him a warm kiss.

CHAPTER VII.

“THE SWEETS OF LOVE ARE MIXED
WITH TEARS.”

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“THE SWEETS OF LOVE ARE MIXED WITH TEARS.”

A PLEASANT surprise was in store for Carita. On Saturday evening, as soon as they heard the far-off sounds of the approaching wagon, she and the boys ran down the steep bit of ground, just below the natural lawn on which the house stood, to meet the comers, as was their custom. The regular track made a long *détour* to get round the hill, in softening the ascent for the horses. Tom pulled up the span, and down from the wagon jumped Mr. Grahame. How glad she was to see him! Mrs. Grahame sat beside Eleanor. They had come back with her for ten days, as the minister needed rest; and a clergyman, who happened to be on a visit at San Juan, had promised to take duty for him the two following Sundays. This was delightful. Life in the mountains seemed to be getting to mean a succession of surprises and pleasures,

which would make the time she had looked forward to with so much dread, on account of the father's absence, pass very much more quickly.

To-morrow, she knew, there would be a nice little service in the living-room, to which the Heaths and the Morrisises would come, John Heath bringing his concertina to lead them in the hymns; and Mr. Grahame's sermon would strengthen her, as it always had done at San Juan.

He ran up the hill with the young folks to meet the wagon at the porch. "How long it seems since I saw you last, Carita!" he said. "I do not think you have been to San Juan since you came here two years ago."

"No, I often wanted to go when the wagon went, but I did not like to ask; father has been away so often. When he was away, I did not like to leave mother alone with the boys; and when he was at home, I did not want to leave him."

"And now you will not come until he returns. Mrs. Warner tells me he will probably come back to take you all away from us to settle in San Francisco. We shall be sorry to have you leave us."

Carita felt her heart sink at the thought, and was conscious that it would have troubled her less had she been told this about ten days ago.

The wagon pulled up. "Here, Carita, come quickly! how long you are! And you look as though you had been asleep ever since we went away. Take some of these parcels inside."

The girl roused herself from the thoughts that Mr. Grahame's words had awakened within her breast; smiled brightly, and ran to Mrs. Warner's side to help her and Mrs. Grahame down with their things.

"I am so happy that you have come," she said, as the clergyman's wife kissed her warmly.

"Why, Carita, child! how you have grown, to be sure!" cried the warm-hearted woman; "and so bonny, too, I should hardly have known you."

Eleanor never cared to hear Carita praised. She said it spoiled young girls, and made them vain and conceited. Mrs. Grahame knew her feelings on the subject, but was determined to say what she pleased.

"The child gets plenty of cold chill and frost," she said, in private to her husband; "a little warm sun will do her good."

Three days of the Grahames' visit were taken up by a camp picnic. They went, some of them in the wagon and the others on horseback, to Choke Cherry Gulch, a wonderfully romantic cañon, or mountain pass, about twenty miles away. Of course

they slept in the open. It was getting rather cold, but they had plenty of wraps and bearskins, and did not feel it.

A prolonged picnic like this is charming in the Rocky Mountains. You shoot game, catch delicious trout, gather wild fruits in plenty, and need to take very few provisions generally.

Mr. Grahame was as good a shot as he was a preacher. He had his revolver with him, which was well for one at least of the party.

They were gathering buffalo currants, a fruit like our black currants, which ripens late—the two ladies, with Alick and Ronald. Carita was mixing the bread. Mr. Grahame had just gone to his wife, who had called him to come and see a great grizzly bear that was feeding amongst the choke cherries on the other side of the stream from them, when suddenly Mrs. Warner gave a scream.

“A rattlesnake!” she cried.

Ronald had disturbed one in reaching a currant bush that was on a ledge above him. The horrible creature shook its rattle three times and then reared its ugly head, prepared to bite. In a moment Mr. Grahame had his revolver out and shot the venomous animal right in the mouth, so that the little ball came

out some inches farther down, else it would have gone ill with poor Ronnie, so far away from home, with no ammonia or strong spirit at hand to act as an antidote to the poison.*

No other adventure disturbed the three days at Choke Cherry Gulch.

The ten days of the Grahames' visit seemed to fly fast. The end of October brought Philip Emerson to Pepperbox Flat, on his way, as he called it, to El Paso county. It was a very roundabout way, but no one reminded him of the fact ; they were all too glad to see him.

Then the long, hard winter set in ; and the ranches were shut in from the world below. More stimulating food was needed ; no fish or game were brought in, but each family killed a steer twice during the winter. It was hung in a small outbuilding, and in the cold, highly rarefied air the outer skin hardened

* Near where I stayed in Colorado, a boy was saved by being drugged with raw spirit, after a rattlesnake's bite ; and one was shot in the ranch by a lad, just as Mr. Grahame shot the one at the picnic. I used to wonder that the children were not more afraid of them than they were. They learned, however, to be careful in their steps through any long or tangled grasses, as did the horses and the mules.

and turned black ; and the meat would have kept sweet, frozen as it was, for three or four months if necessary.

Joyce often came up to Elk Lodge ; she knew what a comfort her friendship was to Carita, and tried on that account to make herself as agreeable as possible to Mrs. Warner, with whom, at last, she became quite a favourite.

Stephen had written from San Francisco, just before going on board the little schooner which was to take him to the Maitailoa Islands.

Unless they hailed a homeward-bound vessel on their way, there could be no further news of him until the end of December.

In spite of deep snow which lay everywhere, Philip Emerson managed to come over to Pepperbox Flat for Christmas Day. Mr. and Mrs. Heath insisted on having the Warners also, and would take no denial from Eleanor. Their little cabin was as full as it could be, which only made things go more merrily.

Towards evening, however, Carita felt very sad and depressed. Lately she had not been well at all, but had gone about her work as usual, without complaint. The intense cold of the mountains did not suit her Southern constitution, and she was not warmly enough

clad. Eleanor liked to keep the cabin very warm with a great log fire; she was not in the habit of running outside as often as Carita had to do, so she never suffered from the cold herself. The girl's lungs were sound enough, but soon she began to suffer severely from rheumatism.

When she and Mrs. Warner had gone into Joyce's room to take off their things, Joyce had shown her a necklet.

"This is a Christmas present, Carrie," said Joy; "is it not pretty?"

"Very. Who gave it to you?"

"Mr. Emerson had a packet from home, and he said his mother sent this for me. There was an evening shawl for mother, too, and a beautiful book for Dorothy."

"How kind of her!"

"Was it not? He says she is so glad that he can come to see us sometimes; and that a little reminder of home life is good for him."

In the evening, when the depressed feeling crept over her, Carita felt her eyes often wandering towards Phil's present on Joy's dress. Could it be that she felt envious? She tried to be gay and to drive away the low spirits, but it was no use. Philip

and Joyce seemed so happy together ; he talked so much with her, and Carita felt left out in the cold, some way.

Now and then she found that he watched her, but it was in a criticising, cold way, she thought ; he did not smile as he did when he looked and spoke to Joy. Presently he came over to her side of the room.

“ Why do you look so grave, Carita ? You are not happy to-night.”

She could not hide her feelings ; it was a habit she had never learned, so she said simply,—

“ I was thinking just now, Mr. Emerson, that every one here had others who belonged to them, and I, only, seem quite alone.”

“ I am alone, too, Carita.”

“ Not in the same sense as I. And besides, I miss father to-night ; it is the first Christmas we have been without him.”

“ I am curious to see Mr. Warner. He must be of a more generous nature than his wife, or you would not miss him so much.”

“ Why does he not go back to Joyce ?” thought Carita. “ She is not grave and unhappy-looking to-night. She looks happier and sweeter than I ever saw her before.”

She could find nothing pleasant to say to Philip. Soon he left her side and went to Mr. Heath, with whom he talked for the rest of the evening.

How bad the pain in Carita's limbs was that night ! But there was a still sorer pain at her heart. She knew now that she loved this Englishman, to whom she could never be anything more than the Mexican girl, Carita, without family or name. And Joyce loved him, too ; she saw it in her eyes, knew it from the tones of her voice when she spoke of him. A feeling of something like anger with Joyce, her dear, good friend, took possession of her, but only for a very short time. She fought it down bravely, and prayed for strength and help in this new trouble. "Him that overcometh," that was how her verse began, was it not?—that verse about the new name. Poor little Carita ! things seemed all against her just now.

When the letter came from Mr. Warner, she was lying ill with rheumatic fever. Mr. Heath was almost like a doctor, he had read so many medical works, and visited the sick constantly. Eleanor was thankful to let him take Carita's case in hand, for there was no doctor nearer than at San Juan.

For seven weeks the poor girl lay helpless and

racked with pain. When the fever left her she was utterly prostrate. In fact, she did not regain her strength until April.

Mr. Warner ought to have been on his way home by that time. He was detained, however, much longer than he had expected, and a letter came at last containing money and the news that he would not be with them until the end of November.

"It vexes me more than I can tell you," he wrote to his wife, "to be away from you so long, but I have just now an opportunity of making money, and establishing first-class business connections, which will enable me to make a comfortable home in San Francisco, and to give the boys the advantages for which we have both longed. It frets me to think of you all, up in the mountains without me, but it will be best for us in the long run, so try and put up with it a little longer, dear Nell. . . ."

Eleanor was terribly disappointed, and Carita felt it even more than she did, for she was very weak, and she had missed the sympathy Stephen would have shown her during her long illness sorely.

"I shall write and invite a cousin of mine, who is staying at Colorado Springs, to come and spend a few months with me," said Mrs. Warner. "It will be

intolerably dull pulling through another eight months alone here."

Her cousin, Mrs. Bombasin, a young and gay widow from Chicago, accepted the invitation. A summer in a log cabin would be agreeable as a novelty.

Somehow, Carita conceived an aversion to this visitor before she saw her. From the moment that she heard her name and estate, she made up her mind she would be antipathetic.



CHAPTER VIII.

UNDER THE PINES.

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“Wistful, longing, through the green
Twilight of the clustered pines.”

“**M**RS. BOMBASIN may be very nice, after all, Carita,” said Joy.

“I am sure she is not, Joy. Her husband has only been dead a few months ; if she were nice, she would not go visiting around in this way. She will come and turn everything upside-down with her ways, I know she will.”

The afternoon Mrs. Bombasin was to arrive, Carita made an excuse to go down to the vegetable garden for something she said she needed in the kitchen. In reality she longed for a quiet half-hour before this dreaded invasion of their home took place.

On the way, feeling weary, she sat down to rest on a fallen tree ; there she fell into a day-dream. So absorbed was she that a man on horseback came over

the soft turf, right up to her, before she heard his approach.

"Carita!" said a voice, only too familiar to her memory; "Carita! how fortunate I am to meet you!"

She trembled so, poor child; partly from weakness, partly from the sensations produced by Philip Emerson's eyes, which were full of pleasure at the sight of her, that when she tried to stand up and shake hands with him, she sank down again, pale and faint.

"Why, Carita, how changed you look! Have you been ill? No one told me, and I am sure you have. Tell me about it." He checked the term of endearment that was slipping out, and sat down beside her on the tree, holding his horse by the bridle.

"I have had rheumatic fever, and it has left me weak. I am better now," and she tried to smile; but it was the ghost of her former merry smile, that flickered over her pale face, and it made Phil's heart ache.

"You came so suddenly upon me," she added, "and I was startled."

"What were you thinking of, Carita, with your face in your hands? I really did not know you until I was close to you."

The pale face was crimson now, she was so transparent and honest. The old habit of untruthfulness fostered by timidity in her childhood had been rooted out, like an ill weed, long ago. She did not answer but asked him a question in return.

"Are you going to the Heaths, Mr. Emerson?"

"I was, Carita, but I am not sure now whether I shall. I am on my way to San Juan on business, and I may ride on there without stopping, and call on them as I return."

"This is a roundabout way to San Juan, Mr. Emerson," said Carita, who was beginning to feel like her old self again, finding Philip so friendly.

"It is the way I like best, Carita. But don't call me 'Mr. Emerson' always; I don't like it."

"What shall I call you? Every one calls you 'Mr. Emerson,' except Harold, and he says 'Emerson' only, which I should not like to do."

"Call me 'Phil,' Carita."

How sweetly her name sounded just then, as it came from his lips; caressingly, it seemed. For the first time in her life its meaning flashed through her mind, and her heart beat fast.

This would not do, it must not be. Joyce Heath loved him; she wore his gift, and he loved Joyce; she

had been certain of this. Then why did he not ride straight on to her; and why did he look at her so, and make her tremble by his presence? She felt cold and troubled, so she got up and said she must go; she had to be back quickly—a visitor was expected.

“Joyce will be sorry if you do not call, Mr. Emerson,” she said, standing before him. He seemed to be thinking, and remained seated, so she repeated her words.

“Joyce will not know I have passed near, unless you tell her, Carita.”

Then he took one of her hands in his, and she had no strength to take it away.

“I came this way to see you, Carita. I love you, dear, dear little Carita.” He sprang to his feet, and held her in his arms, for she seemed as though she would faint.

“I have frightened you, darling.”

Still she could not speak. Since that long fever she had felt the same pain which had seized her now, several times, but she did not know what it meant. Her great dark eyes were at last raised to his with such a look of love that Phil was satisfied, and did not try to make her say anything.

"I thought you loved Joyce," she said at last, timidly.

She scarcely needed his assurance ; yet, in the midst of her happiness, a feeling of pity for Joyce found its way into her heart.

How long the two might have sat there one cannot say, had they not been disturbed by the passing of a hired buggy from San Juan. It was the expected visitor. Carita knew that, in a moment, by the dress and the long ostentatious crape veil fastened coquettishly on to the bonnet. Whether Mrs. Bombasin had seen them or not, she could not tell ; she had scarcely time to think about it, for Philip's horse, forgotten by its master, finding the hold on its bridle relaxed, had wandered away, and knowing by this time that it was near the good feed which was always to be found on Pepperbox Flat, it had sagaciously trotted off in that direction, and its master had no choice now but to follow.

"So much the better, darling," he said to Carita. "I shall see you again now, before I leave."

"Oh, not to-morrow, Phil!" She blushed as she said the name for the first time.

"Why not to-morrow, Carita? I should like to come up to see Mrs. Warner, and to tell her this, if I

may. I want to be able to come and see you when I please, and I cannot do so until she gives me permission, you know."

But Carita felt as though she would like to keep this all to themselves for a time ; in fact, she would rather not let any one know anything of it till the father came home ; he should hear about it first, she pleaded.

Philip gave into her wish, although it was much against his will, and contrary to his feeling of what was right. He saw, however, that Carita dreaded Mrs. Warner ; indeed, from the first it had been evident to him that there was an utter lack of sympathy between them, and this had made him feel more tenderly towards the lonely girl.

"I shall go on to San Juan this evening, dearest," he said ; "it will be a bright moonlight night. Then I can return to-morrow evening, and I shall contrive somehow to see you the day after to-morrow. I shall tell Mr. Heath, Carita."

She did not say no to that. Perhaps it would be best, and she knew she could trust her secret with the Heaths. Poor Joy ! What would she say ?

"I must hurry away now, Phil, or I shall be in trouble."

He took a small ring off his little finger. "It was a gift from my mother, darling; you will like it the better for that."

He placed it on her third finger, but it was too large, so he tried it on the middle one. "It must stay there," he said.

"But, Phil, I dare not let it stay there. Mrs. Warner would see it, and ask where it came from."

Seeing a frown come, she added quickly, "I will fasten it round my neck with a little gold heart that once belonged to my own mother, Phil; I shall like it better there, and no one will see it."

He smiled again, well pleased, as she unfastened the ribbon and bade him pass it through the ring and tie it round her full throat. He was so long about it that she had to fasten it herself at last.

A long last good-bye, and Carita hurried back through the dwarf oaks, the nearest way to the cabin. Happily for her, Eleanor was excited by the cousin's arrival, and she slipped into the kitchen and began to prepare supper unnoticed.

When she went to her little room that night, she was able to go early, as Eleanor had much to say to her cousin, and was glad to be alone with her. She knelt along beside her bed, thanking God for this

new and precious gift to her ; praying for His blessing on her lover ; laying bare her pure young soul full of love and happiness before her heavenly Father. She remembered poor Joy, too, suffering, as she felt sure she must be, and she earnestly prayed that she might find comfort. Then she fell to wondering that he had not rather loved Joyce, fair, lovely Joyce, than herself, the poor, lonely Mexican girl. Would his friends approve and think her worthy of him ? For a while this thought troubled her ; but the memory of his loving words, the look in his true eyes, and the touch of his lips took entire possession of her mind until she fell asleep with her hand over his ring.

CHAPTER IX.

“A WOUNDED SPIRIT WHO CAN BEAR?”

CHAPTER IX.

“A WOUNDED SPIRIT WHO CAN BEAR?”

MRS. BOMBASIN justified all Carita's expectations completely. She created quite a little revolution in the internal arrangements at Elk Lodge. Her coffee she liked made only in the French fashion; the bread ought to be raised with salt instead of yeast; and she was continually in and out of the kitchen, mixing new dishes, for which the ingredients had to be fetched from the one general store down at Rattlesnake Bar, seven miles away, at all kinds of inconvenient hours. She declared it was delightful to have access to a kitchen again, after being so long in a boarding-house. The fact was, she cared nothing for the beauty around her, and seldom went outside, there being no desirable men at leisure to act as escort and admirers. She never read, and seldom sewed; and as there was nothing else to do and no one to flirt with, she tried to kill time in the

kitchen, where she harassed and disturbed Carita beyond endurance.

I am anticipating, however. The morning after her arrival, as soon as Carita sat down to breakfast, Mrs. Bombasin looked fixedly at her, and said,—

“Then it was you, after all, whom I saw a little way down the hill on my way here yesterday? I was not sure of it last night.”

Carita felt her cheeks burn. Her companion would be commented on next, no doubt.

“You need not blush so; there was nothing to be ashamed of in the appearance of your friend. I thought him a most distinguished-looking man for a stockman, which I supposed him to be from his dress.”

Oh, the dreadful woman, if she would only stop before Mrs. Warner came in! Carita rushed to the stove, where she could only make a pretence of pulling out a damper and closing an oven door.

After breakfast, Eleanor and her friend sat down before the fire in the living-room to have a gossip, Carita remaining in the kitchen to wash up and put away the breakfast things. There was only a slight partition between the two rooms. Whilst Carita was busy, she did not distinguish anything of the con-

versation between the two ladies ; but when standing to rest for a few moments, feeling tired and heated, the sound of her own name caught her ear. Mrs. Bombasin was speaking.

You must not judge my poor heroine too severely when I tell you that she could not resist remaining quiet for a few minutes. After all, as she said to herself, Mrs. Warner knew she was there, and might have remembered how easily voices could be heard in the cabin.

"‘Carita’ you called that girl ; what an odd name for a help !”

"She is not, properly speaking, ‘a help.’ Stephen adopted her when she was a child ; that is to say, he bought her first, and adopted her as a daughter afterwards.”

"Then that accounts for her dark skin. It is not the negro type, though.”

"Oh, no ; she is a pure Mexican. Steeve had to give fifty dollars for her, to an old woman in whose hut she was born. She was ill-treating the child, and Stephen took pity on it.”

"He had better have left her where she was ; I don’t think she is very good-tempered. She flushed up when I spoke to her this morning about a man I

saw her talking to yesterday, on my way here. Quite a presentable-looking man, too, he was."

"I don't know who it could be, then, for there is no one in the neighbourhood more distinguished-looking than Mr. Heath, the father of an English family near this, and he is at least fifty."

"I can assure you, then, that Carita's friend is both young and distinguished-looking; and from the look of his horse and saddle-bags, I fancy he had come some distance. If I were you, I should watch the girl more closely; deceit runs in the Mexican blood."

Carita heard no more. She would not have heard as much as this had she not been, as it were, petrified by the idea that she had been bought and paid for—like any slave in the market! Mrs. Wilson was a Southerner, and she had often heard her talk of the prices paid by her father for this woman or that child. Presently she heard the horse mentioned, and that she must be watched, for "deceit ran in the blood." The strange pain came just under her breast, but she managed to get to the door; then she fainted, and there she was found a few minutes later, conscious, again, sitting on the ground, a white, wan look on her face.

Tom it was who came running up from the corral to ask her to go and help him saddle a fresh young filly which he was bent on training.

"What's up, Carita? How sick you look!"

She could not speak at first.

"Where is mother?" he said. "I will bring her to give you something."

"No, no! I want nothing," she gasped. "I shall be all right in a minute."

Soon she got up, but she looked dazed and troubled.

"I was coming to ask you to help me saddle the filly, Carrie. Ben Heath is going down to Lazy Man's Cañon, to meet Mr. Emerson; he's coming up from San Juan to-night, and I know mother will let me go too. I wanted to try Zoe with my new saddle a bit first."

Ah! *he* was coming to-night. The thought did not make her heart glad any longer. He would feel differently towards her when he knew she had been bought, as cattle are bought. Was it false, then, what the father had told her about her own father having been an officer? And he had said, too, that her mother was a lady. Mexicans were better than negroes, certainly; still, she had been paid for, like any negro!

If she had listened a little longer, she would have

heard Eleanor tell her cousin how it had all happened, and what the old woman confessed as to her parentage. Also, that Stephen loved her, and made as much of her as though she had been his own child. And this might have comforted her. As it was, the iron had entered her soul, and she believed she would never be happy again.

All day she went about her work in a weary, listless fashion. "A sullen, sulky nature," said Mrs. Bombasin to Eleanor; "I wonder how you can put up with her at all!"

The next morning Joyce came to the Lodge. Carita was out by the corral, feeding the young "bosses." After shaking hands, the two friends looked at each other for a moment, without speaking. Both were pale and sad-looking. Carita expected this of Joyce, but Joy could not understand the expression of utter dejection and weariness that was in her friend's face, and she forgot her own pain, and forced herself to speak gaily.

"I thought I should find you looking like a rose with the dew on it, Carrie. I thought you would——"

"Don't, Joy, dear; I am not well to-day. I had such pain, nearly all night, and it always makes me tired and sick-looking."

"I have a little note for you, Carrie, from him. We had a long talk this morning, and he told me all about it. I mean to be his friend as well as yours, dear."

How bravely she looked and spoke, good Joyce! No one could have guessed that she had spent half an hour on the ground under the dwarf oaks, on the way up, battling with this, her first great sorrow.

Carita looked wistfully at her, then she flung her arms round her true friend, and they both cried.

"I was so very happy, Joy, at first; now, everything is changed. I cannot tell you about it now, but I will try to come to you to-morrow, some time."

"I must run home again, Carrie; read your note, and tell me what to say to him."

Her first letter from Phil. The first, and perhaps the last, she thought, sadly, for she must tell him to-day.

"Well, Carrie, I know what he asks; he told me. Shall I say you will be there?"

"Yes, dear; I will be there. Good-bye."

Joyce hurried down the wood again. Mrs. Warner had fortunately been in front of the house, and had neither seen her come nor go.



CHAPTER X.

UNDER THE QUIVERING ASPENS.



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"CARITA," said Mrs. Warner, coming into the kitchen half an hour later, "Mrs. Bombasin and I are going over to Craigie Lea. I have a notion that the Forbeses are there ; I saw their Jabez ride past a few minutes ago. If they are not there we shall get Jabez's wife to make us some coffee, so you need not expect us back until six or seven o'clock."

"How fortunate for me!" thought Carita. "I shall be able to go to Silverdale without any fear of being missed. Ronnie will be sure to go with them to see the 'Buster.'"

"What is the matter with you lately, Carita?" continued Mrs. Warner ; "you are so quiet, and seem so heavy and dull."

"I have not felt well the last two days."

The word "mother" was on her lips, but she checked it ; she would not use that word any more.

“ You are hipped, I believe ; you ought to be getting strong now the warmer weather is coming. By the way, Carita, Mrs. Bombasin says she saw you talking to some one down the road the day she came. Who was it ? ”

Carita had felt what was coming, and turned quickly, apparently to reach a plate from the shelf, but in reality that the warm tell-tale blood might not be seen as it rushed to her face.

“ It was Mr. Emerson.”

“ Oh, I never thought of him ; he was to be there again last night, Tom said. He is looking after Joyce Heath. I don't suppose his folks at home will like the match as well as the Heaths do, for they are amongst the best people in their country, Mrs. Heath tells me. The English make more of family and position than we do, by a long way.”

Eleanor went to get ready for the ride to Craigie Lea, quite satisfied as to Mrs. Bombasin's distinguished-looking stockman, but she had sent one more shaft home to poor Carita's loving heart.

Half a mile from Elk Lodge, back amongst the mountains, is a romantic little glen which Joyce had christened “ Silverdale,” not because it was rich in silver ore, like some other places not far away, but on

account of a small group of the silver spruce (*Abies Englemannii*), always lovely, with their symmetrical branches and the soft bluish white sheen of the needles. In some lights they appear to be covered with slight hoar frost, in others they have a pale metallic blue shade. In the moonlight the effect of these trees, growing as they do in sheltered nooks, protected by the great strong pitch pines of sombre foliage, is wonderfully beautiful. Below these, near to the stream, are the wild cherry, willow, and quivering aspen trees. Many a flower blooms freely in Colorado which is cultivated with pains in English gardens. No frequented track was near Silverdale; Joyce had discovered its hidden beauties, and taken Philip there during his first visit.

To this glen Carita had often brought her work during the previous summer; and there, too, Joyce had often repeated to herself those lines we all know so well:—

“Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Thro’ the wave that runs for ever.”

At three o'clock Philip was waiting there for Carita—no poet's rhymes running through his brain, his

heart was too full of his own strong love. His horse was wisely and safely fastened to a pine this time.

In spite of the trouble and fears that filled her, Carita had not been able to resist the temptation common to every woman who is womanly, that of trying to make herself look as attractive as possible to please the eyes of the man she loves. The details so important to her are generally lost upon him, at least if he be one of the men who are most worth pleasing; but the general effect, if it is becoming, never.

As Phil saw her come towards him under the floating sunbeams and shadows, he thought Carita looked more beautiful than he had ever seen her before; but when, after folding her in his arms, he held her from him to look at her face, he was shocked to note the dark lines under the large lustrous eyes, and the drooping corners of the curved lips.

"I thought you would look better to-day, dearest," he said. "I was hoping that my love was making you as happy as yours has been making me for the last two days. You have been with me night and day, darling."

"I *was* very, very happy, Phil, but something has

happened to me." She began to shiver, but went on :
"I want to tell you about it ; let us sit down."

He threw himself down on the ground beside her, then he remembered her danger of rheumatic pains, and got up to fetch his saddle, on which he enthroned her, putting his strong arm round her and gently forcing her head down until it rested on his shoulder.

"Now, darling, tell me what has been vexing you."

Carita began her story. She could speak to him better so, with her face half hidden in his full beard. When she came to the part about Mr. Warner's having bought her, she began to tremble, and Phil felt her little hands, which he held in one of his large strong ones, turn quite cold.

"You need not tell me any more, my poor darling," he said. "I know it all. Mr. Heath told me your history when I spoke to him two days ago. Mr. Warner had told him everything about you, Carita. Why should this hurt you so?"

"You could not marry a nameless girl—one who had been bought, too, Phil."

"You have been making a mountain out of a molehill, dearest. You are not nameless, simply because you do not happen to know much about your parentage. You may find out all about that yet ; but

if you never do, what does it matter? You shall not be nameless long. Carita is a charming Christian name, just as much one as Minnie, and far prettier. Carita Emerson, how do you think it sounds, darling? I want to make you laugh, Carita."

She hid her face again. "He did pay money for me though, Phil."

"Well, what of that? The horrid old woman was greedy, that was all. She had no right to ask it."

"And, Phil, I began to fancy that father—Mr. Warner, I mean—had not told me the truth when he said my father was an officer in the Mexican army."

"Foolish little woman! you should have known him too well to think so. Mr. Heath has no such notion."

The warmth of Philip's love dispelled the mists of doubt and sadness; but he saw that she was very frail, and that in her delicate state of health she was likely to be injured by the cold, unloving influence which surrounded her just now in Mr. Warner's absence. All the strong love within him rose up, urging him to take her out of them at once.

Mr. Heath had told him that he feared his friends would not like his marrying a Mexican girl of whose family so little was known; but Phil had replied that

he had cut himself off from all ties, save the one that bound him to his mother, and she loved him too unselfishly to want him to give up so good and sweet a girl as Carita. She would gladly know him to be so well married.

When Carita told him what Eleanor had said on this point, he laughed away her scruples.

And then he urged her to go away with him at once. He would meet her a mile away, with a wagon, and drive her to San Juan, where he felt sure Mr. Grahame would be persuaded to marry them when he knew all. And if not, why then they could go on to Denver, in one day, by train, and be married there.

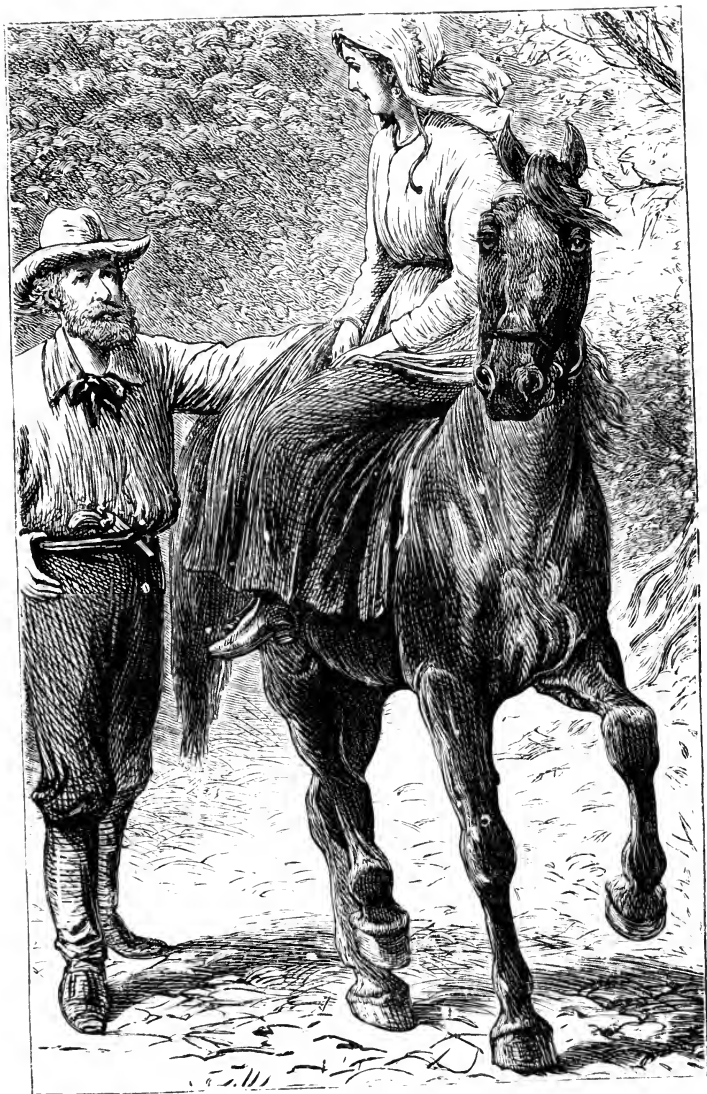
He had not yet told her, he said, of the piece of good fortune that had happened to him since Christmas. An old aunt had died and left him five hundred pounds. He was rich with that in Colorado, in these hard times, and was buying a ranch of his own. His homestead would be small, but he would make it very comfortable for her, and she would get well and strong, and ride about as she loved to do, over their ranch beside him, until these pale cheeks would get full and blooming again. Such a picture he drew of the free, happy life they two would lead

together, that Carita, her strength of will weakened by the long illness, and her courage failing as she thought of the hard seven months which were before her, felt herself carried away by the force of his passion.

He had changed his position as he talked, and was now on the ground at her feet, her two hands in his. The passionate love in his eyes magnetized her ; she leaned back, feeling almost faint, against the bank, which was close behind the saddle.

A sharp prick in the back made her start forward again. It broke the spell, and she turned to see what had hurt her so. The huge branching horns of an elk had been buried in the soil above her, and she had leaned against a projecting point. The pain was not great, but it served to bring back her self-command, and to recall her to a sense of her duty ; for, at the same time, her promise to Stephen flashed through her mind. His face suddenly came up before her as he had looked when he bade her good-bye, and told her to be faithful to Eleanor and the boys.

"I cannot, I dare not go with you now, Phil. I promised father to stay with the boys until he came home again. Do not tempt me to break my word,



“Placed her on his horse.”—Page 163.

Phil. He has been such a kind, good father to me, ever since he first saw and pitied me. How can I think of leaving them all while he is away?"

Philip saw it was not right, and that it would be useless to urge it, much as he hated to leave her. He now soothed and comforted her; he would come again to see her as soon as he possibly could; meanwhile she must write to him often, and when Mr. Warner got back, nothing should keep her from him any longer.

The air began to get chill, and Carita's pale face warned him at last that she ought not to stay out any longer. He kissed her lips until the rich, warm colour came and stayed there, placed her on his horse and walked beside it, with his arm resting on the saddle to support her better, down the gulch as near to the house as she would allow him. For his part he almost wished that Mrs. Warner might see him, so that he might have the matter out with her; then he could come to see Carita openly, he thought. As it was, he could not even write to her excepting through the Heaths, a roundabout way which was hateful to him. They parted unseen, however; and Carita went inside to prepare for the evening meal with a braver heart than she had taken out. The sore, bitter feel-

ing had left her ; Philip knew all, yet he loved her and would never forsake her. What mattered it that Eleanor was cold to her and unreasonable, and their visitor false and cruel in her judgment of her ? She could work with a lighter heart now. The summer months would soon pass away, she had so many happy thoughts to comfort her. Then father would come, and Philip would persuade him to spare her. The boys would be going to school, and she would not be needed so much. Phil loved her, and that was enough for the present.

Three weeks passed away without anything serious happening to mar Carita's happiness. Her colour began to return. Mrs. Bombasin's sharp, suspicious eyes could find no fault with her, watch as they might. All seemed to promise a peaceful, if busy summer for her, as well as returning health and vigour. A change came, however, and it was wrought by the restless visitor whom Carita had distrusted since the first mention of her name.

CHAPTER XI.

‘ I KNOW THEIR SORROWS.’

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"I KNOW THEIR SORROWS."

MRS. BOMBASIN had had quite enough of life in a log cabin up in the mountains, without a single presentable specimen of the opposite sex with whom she could chat, ride, or walk. She said there was some pressing business which demanded that she should consult a lawyer at once. Her last letters from Chicago were not satisfactory, and there was no one nearer than Denver whose opinion would be in the least worth having.

"I cannot imagine why you should stay in this dull, out-of-the-way place, Eleanor, whilst your husband is away so long," she said, after communicating her intention of leaving for Denver.

"What else could I do, Eliza?"

"Why, give up housekeeping, and go to board in a nice lively place, where you could send those racket-

ing boys to school. I never would be troubled with them around all day long, as you are here."

"I should like nothing better, and the idea has come into my mind before. I thought of it when Stephen sent me word he should be away so much longer. No one could hate this lonely life more than I do."

"Then why not make up your mind to leave it and come with me now to Denver? I know a most elegant boarding-house, where it would cost you really very little."

"The fact is, I have less money than you imagine; times have been hard with us here so long now."

"I can tell you just how much it would cost you. The boys' schooling you would get free, of course; and there is no better school anywhere than the High School at Denver." Mrs. Bombasin then made her reckoning. "For yourself and the three boys they would only ask twenty-five dollars a week; living is cheap there just now."

"You are forgetting Carita."

"Gracious me! you surely don't need to take Carita round everywhere you go."

"But what could she do, Eliza?"

"Why not leave her here to look after things?"

That high-toned friend of hers, the Heath girl, could perhaps come up and sleep with her. It would be nonsense to have her always round. Why, with the boys away at school, and you all boarding, there would be nothing for her to do."

"Stephen would never forgive me if anything happened to the girl. He cares for her as much as if she were his own daughter."

"Then he ought not to, and he has just spoilt her by making such a fuss over her. I tell you what, Nell, the people I was boarding with at Colorado Springs would give anything to get a help like she is. Let me write to them about it, and then if they want her she could stay with them whilst you go on to Denver, and earn a little to buy herself some new clothes with, into the bargain."

"Stephen would not hear of it."

"Stephen is not here, and he would know nothing about it until he came home. You could pick her up again on the way from Denver some time in October, and be all up here again, ready for your husband when he comes. I don't believe in men having all the good times, and leaving us poor women with nothing to do but to mope round by ourselves."

This idea, rejected at first, commended itself by

degrees more and more to Eleanor, who was thoroughly discontented with the life on the ranch. It was not to be wondered at, with her temperament ; both she and Stephen had made a mistake when they took one another for better and for worse. The money her husband had sent her, together with what Sam Morris could forward from the sales of butter, etc., would be just sufficient for the expenses of living in Denver if she left Carita behind. She would talk to the girl about the plan and see how she took it. Mrs. Bombasin assured her that the people at Colorado Springs would treat her in every way as one of the family. Carita might even be glad to go for the sake of a change, and to earn some pocket-money, a luxury which she had never enjoyed so far.

At first Carita was very much upset by the idea ; she had given up Philip for the present for the sake of her promise to stay with Eleanor and the boys. Now the sacrifice she was making was an unnecessary one, and she felt wounded ; still she was determined not to be married until father came home ; nothing should induce her to leave her post voluntarily, or to be unfaithful to her trust. If Eleanor was determined to go to Denver and could not take her, she had the

alternative either to stay at Elk Lodge all alone, or to go to those strange people if they wanted her. She asked Eleanor if she might think it over; and Eleanor, only too glad to have made the proposal, and to find it received more quietly than she had expected, told her she could do so, and they would talk again about it next day. In fact, she need not decide for a week yet ; it would take that time for Mrs. Bombasin's letter to arrive and an answer to be received at Elk Ranch, and she and the boys would not leave until June.

Carita would have liked to consult Mrs. Heath, but a feeling of delicacy prevented her from doing so. She knew that, if she told them her position, the Heaths would urge her to come and live with them until Mr. Warner's return. Their cabin was already as full as it ought to be ; she could not be of any service to them, and, besides that, she could not bear the thought of wounding and unsettling Joy by the sight of her own happiness. If she stayed alone up at Elk Lodge, Philip would not like it, perhaps would not hear of her doing so ; he would be riding over too often, and trying to persuade her to be married at once.

If she went to Colorado Springs, she would be nearer him than she was here ; and then she should

earn some money. Father, she knew, would buy her all she needed before she was married; but it would be very nice to have a little all her own, before she went to Phil. He would hate, though, to think of her going anywhere as a "help"; there was another difficulty.

Before she had time to write to him about it, Joyce brought her a letter from him, saying that he had news from home, which he wanted her to hear at once; and he would be at Silverdale at three o'clock the next afternoon. This was fortunate, for Carita felt it would be much easier to talk than to write about the new aspect of affairs.

Eleanor and her friend were taking their usual siesta when three o'clock struck, and Carita hurried up to the place of meeting. She was stronger and brighter-looking than the last time they met there, when she had trembled, as Phil said, almost like the quivering aspens above their heads; but she was very anxious again to-day, in a different way. And what would his news be, she wondered.

"Carita, darling," Philip began, almost before she was seated on the saddle, which he had placed ready for his little queen, as he had called her, last time, "I have sad news for you to-day. I have had a letter

from my father, the first he has written to me since I left home. It is to tell me that my dear mother is ill, dying, he fears, and she wants to see me before she dies. I cannot bear to go away so far from you, my darling ; but I must go to her, she has been such a patient, loving mother always, and I have never been any comfort to her. I have only caused her sorrow and heartache for the last ten years, Carita. I thought that we should both go home together, next year ; and that it would make her happy to see her worthless boy altered, and to know what a dear little daughter-in-law I had brought for her ; but now I fear I must hurry on alone. I shall not be away long, dearest ; and after that it will be nearly time for Mr. Warner's return ; and then we shall never be parted in this life, please God, again."

Carita put aside her own affairs for a little to comfort Phil. She was tempted to keep them from him entirely ; to let him go now without this new trouble, and tell him by letter as soon as she got to Colorado Springs. So long as he was in England, what could it matter whether she was called a "help" at Colorado Springs or not ? No one she loved would feel any differently towards her, and no one else need know anything about it. Sam Morris and

his wife and the rest of the people round would think she had gone to Denver with the family.

"I can only stay for one hour, Carita," said Phil, thinking that he only, and his going away, were in her thoughts. "I must ride on and reach San Juan to-night, or early to-morrow morning, after a short rest at Lazy Man's Cañon. I want to catch the first steamer from New York that I possibly can. Look up, darling, and tell me you will not let anything worry and make you ill whilst I am away. You must write down my home address, too ; I shall want a letter from you often. I have seen Mr. Heath, and he has promised to post them to me for you."

He took a note-book out of his pocket.

"See," he said, "this is one of the last things my dear mother sent to me. I will write the address on the first leaf ; you will keep it, and put down all the little things that come into your mind, to tell me in your letters. I shall picture you to myself, Carita, continually, up in the mountains here, waiting for me to come back to you."

Poor Carita ! Her heart so full, and so little of it that she might tell him ! For she felt sure now that, if he knew, he would not let her go to an unknown

home with strange people in his absence, delicate as she still was. She was not quite satisfied that it was right to keep it from him ; but she thought it was happier for him to go away without adding anxiety on her account to the anxiety he was in about his mother. No fear that his father might induce him to stay in England, and that he might forget or be untrue to her, entered her mind. So she decided to say nothing about Mrs. Warner's intentions, although it would have eased her so much if she could have told him all, and yet have been able to do what she thought was for the best.

"I shall be able to picture you to myself better than you will me, Carita," he went on. "Everything is so different in England from anything you have seen yet. But you will go there with me some day ; only for a visit, for I like this free life better than the dull English routine I was brought up in.

"I have never given you anything, Phil ; I would have liked you to carry away something from me."

"Give me a bit of the ribbon that has been round your throat, Carita. I will not ask for a lock of hair ; I feel superstitious about hair : I should fancy you might die whilst I was away."

A shiver passed over her ; he felt it, and said,

"How stupid of me to say that, darling! There, we will not talk any more; I must go soon."

How hard it was to part! She clung to him as though they were never to meet again; but she had to go at last. She saw him disappear down the steep trail between the pines, and then she lay face downwards on the turf, feeling as though her life had gone with him.

If Philip had only known what was before her, he would have carried her off in spite of her scruples; have married and taken her to England. She knew that, and the temptation was great. But she felt instinctively that he would be better received by his father if he came alone; and she thought, with the natural pride and self-respect of a good woman, that she would rather her lover told his parents, or at any rate one of them, all about her before she was taken into the family. His mother's blessing on their marriage would add so much to her happiness. On the whole she was convinced that she had acted wisely; but ah! it cost her much, this repression of self.

When the first violence of her grief had subsided, she prayed long and earnestly. Though father and lover were taken away from her, there was One always



“She saw him disappear.” — *Page 176.*

there to whom she might tell all her griefs ; before whom she could spread the circumstances which perplexed and harassed her. He would not remove all the obstacles which made the six months before her seem like a hard and stony road, which she must tread with bleeding feet ; but He would send the "Angel Help," of which Mr. Heath had read on that happy Sunday morning when Phil and she had listened together. An angel, such as the one who was sent to Hagar, driven out by her mistress into the barren desert ; one of those blessed ones who came and strengthened our Lord Jesus in His dark and lonely hour of agony did come to Carita as she lay under the pines on the hillside, bidding her be of good comfort, and bringing to her mind a verse from one of Mrs. Carey's favourite hymns :—

"Who points the clouds their course,
Whom winds and seas obey ;
He shall direct thy wandering feet,
He shall prepare thy way."

It was after five o'clock when Carita rose from the soft turf. How she wished that she might have lain there undisturbed for an hour or two longer ! But it could not be ; hers was the double lot of working and weeping. Tom's voice, sounding clearly through

the still evening air, reached her, as she roused herself.

‘ Carita, Carita ! It’s most supper time, and we’re just awful hungry.”

CHAPTER XII.

“MAN'S EXTREMITY IS GOD'S OPPOR-
TUNITY.”

CHAPTER XII.

“MAN’S EXTREMITY IS GOD’S OPPORTUNITY.”

MRS. WARNER would scarcely have had sufficient energy to carry out the plan of going to Denver with her three boys, without the knowledge of her husband, had Mrs. Bombasin not been there to urge and hurry her on with the necessary preparation, and to accompany her.

So restless and indefatigable was this “daughter of the horseleach”—may I be forgiven for calling her so ugly a name—that a letter having been received in due course from Mrs. Johnson, the enterprising landlady of the boarding-house known as the Temple of Health, at Colorado Springs, saying that she should be very glad to secure the services of the young lady of whom Mrs. Bombasin wrote, and for which she would pay sixteen dollars a month, the family were on their way to San Juan a fortnight after Philip Emerson bade Carita good-bye.

She wrote a long letter to him, telling him of her position ; making the best of it, poor child, lest he should be troubled on her account, and giving him the address of the house to which she was going. Then she made a great mistake, which brought sorrow to both. Instead of giving her letter to Mr. Heath, whom Philip had requested to re-address, stamp, and despatch all her letters, she took it with her, in order to post it herself down at San Juan.

Mrs. Warner had given her five dollars as pocket-money, to begin with, in her new position, and it pleased the poor girl to think that the first little portion of it she should use would be to pay for this, her first letter to Philip. The letter never reached him ; the reason why, I will tell you later on. She carried it carefully enough down the mountains, putting her hand often to the safe place where it lay, as they jolted along in the large wagon. It gave her pleasure to feel it, and to wonder how soon she would have one from Phil again. He ought to receive hers, of course, a fortnight after his own arrival at home. His first letter could not reach Colorado Springs for five weeks yet ; it would have to come to Mr. Heath's first, and then be re-posted. She had told him not to write until he landed in England ; after

that she was to have a letter once a fortnight until he returned.

The party rested for the night at San Juan : Mrs. Warner and her cousin, with Tom and Alick, at the Wilsons ; Carita and Ronald, to the great comfort of the former, at Mr. Grahame's.

The clergyman and his wife disapproved much of Mrs. Warner's arrangements.

"It is perfectly shameful that Carita should be sent to work among strangers in her weak state of health," said Mrs. Grahame, whilst Carita had run over to see Mr. and Mrs. Carey. "I have had a long talk with the poor child, and I very much fear that long fever she had has left heart disease behind."

"I thought so myself, Mary ; but what can we do for her ?"

"Keep her here with us, John."

"Where would she sleep, wife ?"

The little church in San Juan was poor, and the minister had only a small income and a four-roomed house, including the kitchen and his study.

"It would only be for a few months, John ; she is really not fit for much work, and still less for the bustle and worry of a full boarding-house, during the busiest months of the year. I could make the

parlour couch into a comfortable bed for her ; there is still your study as a sitting-room, in case she should be ill."

"Then let her stay, by all means. Here she comes, looking white and tired after the long day's ride ; you must send her to bed soon."

Carita and Ronald were to sleep on shake-downs in the study that night.

Mrs. Grahame's proposal brought tears of grateful affection into the lonely girl's eyes. What a haven of rest this home with the good minister and his loving wife seemed to her ! How glad Phil would be if he knew she was staying with them here ! and father, she knew, would like it far better for her than the strange boarding-house. But she had made up her mind to go to the latter ; she had accepted Mrs. Johnson's offer, had accustomed herself to the idea, and posted her letter telling Phil all about it. Besides which, she knew that the Grahames were poor ; she would put them to some extra expense, and, like the Heaths, they needed no help from her. She had been so accustomed to work, that the idea of four months of idleness, as it seemed to her, appeared quite out of the question.

So she thanked Mrs. Grahame over and again over

in her gratitude, but told her that she would rather go, now it was all arranged.

"Just fancy," she added, "I am to get sixteen dollars a month!" Then she told her friend about Philip and their plans for the future.

"My poor little lamb," said the motherly woman, folding her in her arms as though she were still a child; "but suppose you get ill at this place to which you are going."

"I have thought of that, dear; sometimes I do feel so weak and tired, but I am getting stronger, and if I found it too much for me——"

"You would come back to us at once, Carita?"

"No, dear," she answered, sadly but firmly; "you would take me in, I know, and I should feel like the dove coming back to the ark, but I have written to Hephzibah Flanigan; you remember Hephzibah, our old help? She and Denis live not far from the Springs; they are doing very well there. She was always fond of me, and often helped me in the old school-days, so I have asked her to come and see me soon; then, if I get weaker again, I can go and stay with her until they all go home."

Neither Mrs. Grahame nor her husband could turn Carita from her purpose; finding that, they wisely

tried to encourage and strengthen her, and many a little article which they thought might be of use to her was slipped into her trunk before she left their house.

When Mrs. Warner's plans had been definitely settled, Carita had gone down to Mr. Heath's to tell them where she was going, and to give her address to Joy. As she went down the hill, the fact of her want of a second name recurred to her mind most painfully. How should her letter be addressed? With the San Juan people she had always been "Warner's Carita," with the Grahames and the Careys simply Carita. So far she had needed no other name; but now she was going out into the world, it was a different matter. She confided her trouble to Mrs. Heath and Joy.

"Really, mother, it was too thoughtless of Mr. Warner, was it not, giving her just the one name and nothing more? Fancy addressing a letter, 'Carita, at Mrs. Johnson's,' like they used to address one of our maids in Liverpool, sometimes."

"It was a mistake, dear; your father shall go and talk to Mrs. Warner about it; she will take it from him better than from me."

He went up to Elk Lodge the same evening, and spoke his mind very freely to Eleanor.

"If you are determined to send the girl out into the world whilst your husband is away, you might at least let her have the shelter of his name," he said.

Eleanor inwardly resented his interference, but she admitted the reasonableness of what he said, and told Carita that henceforth she must call herself by their family name. So when they arrived at Manitou, the depôt for Colorado Springs, Mrs. Bombasin introduced her to Mrs. Johnson, who came to meet them there, as Carita Warner, which saved Carita any after embarrassment on this point.

Ronnie clung about her neck at parting, quite inconsolable; he had always been loving with her. Alick's attention was diverted by a lad who came round the cars with strawberries and ice cream. Tom insisted on going outside the depôt to see Carita safely inside Mrs. Johnson's buggy, which that lady pointed out to them with some pride, although the conductor threatened to leave him behind if he did so.

Mrs. Warner kissed her adopted daughter, for the second time that Carita could remember; her trunk was given into the care of the express man, and she found herself seated beside Mrs. Johnson, driving rapidly to the Temple of Health.

It was really a very pleasant-looking abode, this

Temple, with broad verandas all round, and a garden which would some day be very pretty in front ; on the whole, too, she was favourably impressed by her new friend's appearance. Like most women who have had a hard struggle of it in the West for some years, she was hard-featured and plain-looking, as though she had had her face sharply set to the wind for a long time ; but there was no unkindness in the lines about the eyes and mouth. That she was now a prosperous lady of "means," her handsome dress and smart new buggy showed.

"Take off your hat quickly, and don't stop to prink," she said, as soon as they alighted ; "it's most dinner-time, and you must sit next to me to-night."

As Mrs. Bombasin had said, Carita was treated like one of the family, and no more menial work was expected of her than Mrs. Johnson did herself. Ah Sing did all the cooking, assisted by a small Chinese boy, called Ah Fat, who made a very clever little waiter at table.

Carita's duties were chiefly to keep an eye on Ah Fat, to attend to the bedrooms, assisted by an Irish girl ; to look after the comforts of the invalid boarders, and to take charge of the linen and plate.

It was a very strange life to her at first, and she



"A clever little waiter at table."—Page 188.

felt very bewildered by the many faces round her. The ladies—most of them—seemed, to her unsophisticated nature, foolish and unnatural in their manners. They amazed her by the different way in which they talked to and of one another, and their behaviour towards the gentlemen was curious to her, inexperienced as she was in the arts of "civilized" society. These latter were most uninteresting in her opinion, with the exception of one poor fellow who had come from England, far gone in consumption. With him she talked frankly and freely, whenever she had time, without noting or heeding the heartless and stupid insinuations of some of the ladies.

Her thoughtful little acts of kindness were as water in a thirsty land to Edward Arundel, and they raised up for her a new friend who was destined perhaps to influence Carita's future somewhat.

This was Doctor Starkwetter, once the leading physician in San Francisco, whom, fortunately for Colorado, the quest of personal health had now drawn to the Manitou region.

Meeting the young Irish "help," Bridget, who was a recent importation from the old country, down by the road one morning, the doctor asked her what she meant, strong and sturdy as she was, by allowing

Miss Warner to lift and carry the heavy baskets of household linen from room to room, as he had observed she did.

"Faith, an' it's herself ye'll have to be sayin' that same to, docther. It's wearin' herself out entirely, she is, wid lookin' afther them two haythens, Ah Sing and Ah Fat. Saints presarve us! but wasn't it me own self caught them spitting on that same linen to-day, when they was ironing of it?"

"Not on the sheets, Bridget," said the doctor, laughing.

"Faith, and 'twas worse then, docther, for 'twas on the misthress's best white gown."

Bridget was a good-natured girl, and taking the doctor's injunctions to heart, she spared Carita henceforth all the labour she could. The time might have passed pleasantly enough, on the whole, had it not been for that longing for news of Philip. Week after week passed by, and no letter came. At last she summoned up courage to write and tell her anxieties to her friends on Pepperbox Flat, and soon she received a letter from Joy, saying that they were wondering that there was not one to send on to her, but mother said she must not be anxious or distressed, for Mrs. Emerson might be dying when he arrived, and Philip have

omitted to post his letter, or it might have been lost on the way, as several of theirs had been since they came. When, however, another fortnight passed, and still no word came from him who was night and day in her thoughts, poor Carita's heart sank within her, sick with the sore sickness of hope deferred. She had written three times herself—twice since coming to the Springs, in the first letter giving her lover so cheery an account of herself and her surroundings that she felt sure he would not be anxious about her health or annoyed about her position. What could have happened? If he had not arrived safely, surely his people at home would have written to Mr. Heath. Then the belief that his father and mother had urged him to give her up began to force itself on her poor loving heart. They would be sure to wish him to stay in England, and she, the portionless Mexican, Carita, was not a suitable wife for him.

If she could only hide her wound and be quiet, she thought, away from the talk and bustle of all these people, in some sheltered spot where she could rest until father came.

The memory of those hours under the aspens by the stream came back again and again, their sweetness mingled with bitter pain.

She had heard no news of Mr. Warner either. Eleanor had only written two short notes ; she was absorbed in the distractions of Denver life, and said that as they would so soon be all together at home again, there was no need to write more. She would write again to tell her when to join them at the Manitou dépôt.

Carita had never written to Stephen, Mrs. Warner not having encouraged her to do it, so she did not think of doing so now ; besides, it would be too late—he might have left those islands by this time.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE GARDEN OF THE GODS.

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THE GARDEN OF THE GODS.

DOCTOR STARKWETTER had a talk with Mrs. Johnson as well as with Bridget, and the result of this was that Carita was often sent out to drive with Edward Arundel, instead of sitting indoors sewing and mending. Her companion did not find her very talkative, however ; and when they sent back the buggy to the Springs, as they often did for an hour or two, each would take a book, or follow his and her own thoughts whilst they rested on the close dry grass of the prairie, over which the cattle from the township wandered and fed.

Sometimes Carita seemed unable to keep her eyes from travelling wistfully across the wide stretch of prairie which seemed to roll like the ocean in endless waves into illimitable distances, and which produced in her the same vague yearnings to get at something

beyond which we feel when we stand on our Western shore.

"You remind me of a verse of Shelley's," said her companion one day, as she sat thus, lost in reverie.

"Why?" she asked, rousing herself with an effort.

"Because you seem to 'look before and after, and pine for what is not.'"

The tears started into the large, dark eyes. Just then, a vision of Philip riding the bay horse, on which he always came to Elk Ranch, had suggested itself to her longing fancy. She had been turning her gaze towards the direction where she knew the ranch, on which he had spent the last winter and spring, lay; and she had pictured him to herself, riding swiftly across the plain towards her, his face eager and bright, and the love-light in his eyes.

"I am a foolish dreamer, Edward," she said, presently. The two called each other by their Christian names now, when they were alone. "You have just that same far-away look in your own eyes often," she added.

"But not the 'pining,' Carita. Thank God, that has all been taken out of my heart some months now. I often wonder what it is that makes you so sad and wistful-looking. Forget that I am a man, Carrie, and

tell me all about it; a poor sick fellow like I am ought to have some privileges, and I should think it one to be able to comfort you a little. If I were likely to get better, I should want to be something more; but as it is, I am a very safe comforter, Carrie."

The gentle, half-sad tone in which he said this touched the girl's heart. She was very lonely, and it would have been a relief to her if she could have poured her griefs into some true friendly bosom. At first she was tempted to do this by the sympathy which lay in voice and eyes so near to her; but as she considered how she should begin with the tale of her sorrows, the thought of the money transactions with which it commenced and the sense of humiliation and shame a woman feels who sees her love neglected and cast back, so to speak, into her own bosom, stopped the words rising to her lips, and they seemed to form a load on her chest and a lump in her throat which almost suffocated her. Then the old trouble at her heart made itself felt, and her hand went instinctively to the seat of pain.

Edward Arundel laid his hand gently on the other hand which lay near him.

"Don't trouble, dear," he said gently, "and don't talk again for a little while. Perhaps some experiences

of my own make me guess at the nature of the grief you can share with no one. As soon as you feel better, I will tell you something of my own story."

"I am better already. Tell me now ; we shall have to go back soon ; the sun is beginning to colour the rocks yonder ; it will be too cold for you here, very soon."

"My home is in Cheshire, near Liverpool," he began.

Carita started as he said this, and looked at him with such a quick glance of increased interest, that Arundel stopped and said,—

"No, it won't do, I see. I will tell you all about myself some other time."

"I want you to go on now, Edward."

"But why did you start so?"

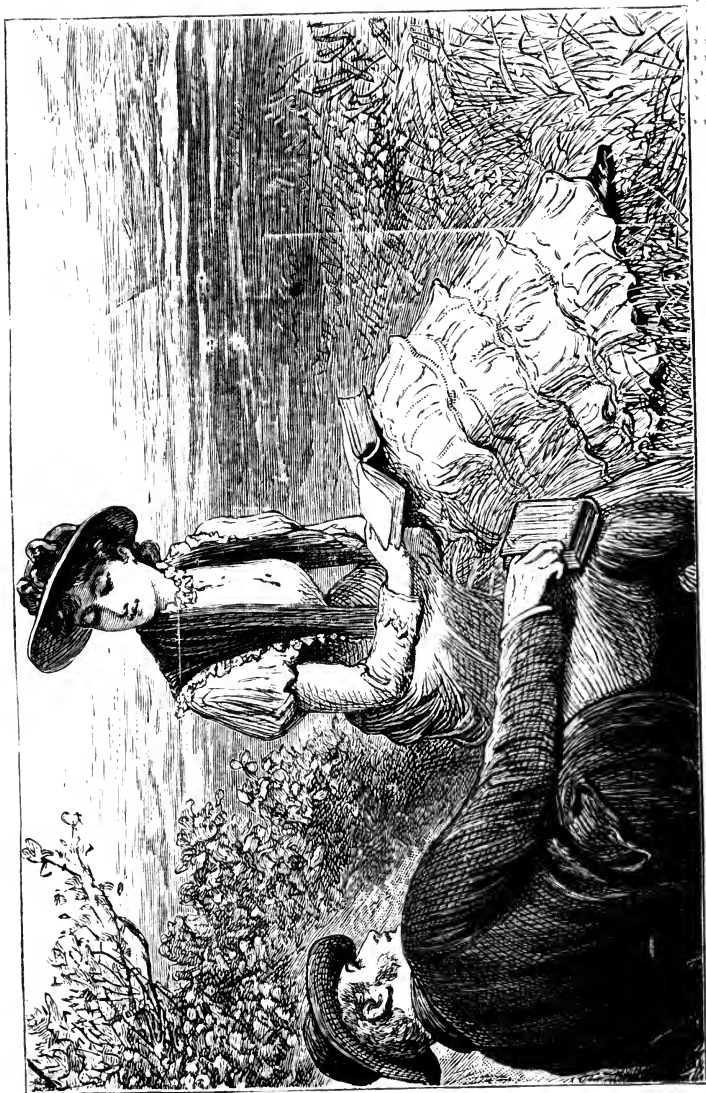
"Because I know some one else who lives near Liverpool," answered Carita, flushing a little, and then turning pale.

"What is the name of that some one, Carrie?"

The hand went to the side again.

So the trouble lies in that direction, thought the young man.

"Never mind, you can tell me some other time. Let us think of something else. Do you know what



“ ‘My home is in Cheshire, near Liverpool,’ he began.” — *Page 198.*

lies over yonder, within those mountains just over the upright walls of rock standing out in the evening sun ? ”

“ No ; I have never been out so far from the Springs before,” replied Carita, in a listless tone. She would rather have heard more about Cheshire just then.

“ There is a lovely little natural park surrounded by mountains. They call it the Garden of the Gods.”

“ What a name, Edward ! Is it very beautiful ? ”

“ So they say ; I have not been there yet, though several camping parties to explore it have been got up since I came to the Temple. I have often looked at the entrance from yonder rise in the plains there ; its name and the narrow gate formed by those huge rocks have a fascination for me. It makes me think of the hymn, ‘ O Paradise, O Paradise.’ I know you read the Bible, Carrie ; I have noticed that in my quiet way.”

“ Ah, I know,” said Carita, quickly ; “ you think of ‘ The Lord God planted a garden in Eden.’ ”

“ Yes, and the old Greek translation translates the word ‘ garden ’ by ‘ Paradise.’ Well, I have often lain out here alone, and thought how beautiful it must be inside there ; that perhaps a clear mountain stream runs through the garden, with trees on either side,

which I imagine to be like those whose leaves are for 'the healing of the nations.' The high mountains you see shut the garden in on every side from the keen piercing winds which are so dreadful to a poor sick chap like me ; and 'no hurtful thing is there.' "

"I see no way into it, though," said Carita. Her companion's expression of face, and his tones, as he talked of the river and the trees, moved her so that she forgot her personal griefs, and looked intently towards this "Garden of the Gods," a beautiful spot, well known to all travellers in Colorado.

"The entrance is narrow and the rocks are straight, Carrie, like the way and the gate that lead to life. From here they seem almost to meet. And that makes me think of a Latin phrase which I learned in my school days, 'Per angustam ad augustam,' that means, 'Through the narrow to the beautiful.' "

The girl grasped all the meaning that lay in the man's thoughts and words. Did the way to the beautiful for both of them indeed lie in the narrow, painful path of difficulty over which her feet had stumbled and bled?

A light in Edward's face, which was a reflection of that light which comes not from this earth's sun, was reflected also in her large, dark eyes, and lit up her

pale face. She took hold of her friend's hand again, and gazing still towards the rocks, she said, "And look, do look at the dark red of one ridge of rocks and the pure white of the other. 'Red like crimson and white as snow,'" she added, in a low voice, as though speaking to herself.

CHAPTER XIV.

PHIL.

CHAPTER XIV.

PHIL.

“To be wroth with those we love
Doth work like madness in the brain.”

WHEN Philip Emerson reached Liverpool, his brother William met him with the good news of his mother's unexpected recovery. She was still very weak, and for some days after Phil's most welcome arrival he found it best not to excite her with any talk about the future which he was planning for himself with Carita.

When, at last, he did venture to broach the subject, the mother's anxious heart was filled with fears and misgivings as to whether this girl, of whose parentage so little was known, and who had been brought up in those Western wilds—as she imagined them—was, indeed, all her son believed her to be.

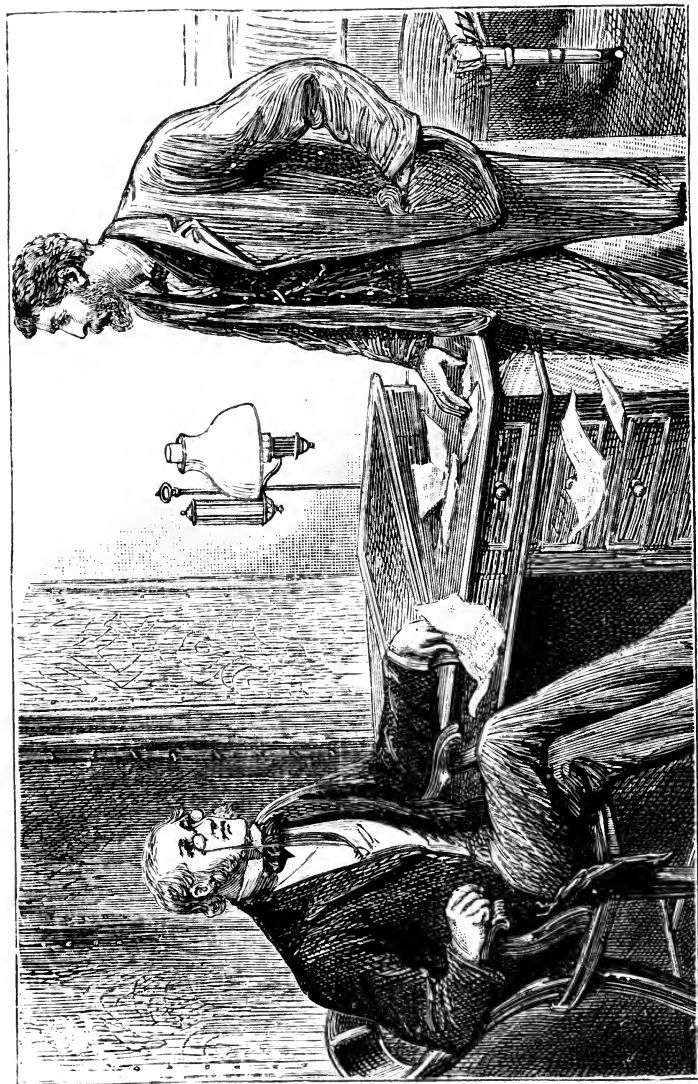
Phil promised to show her Carita's first letter to

him. It cost him something to do this. The first letter that the poor, lonely girl would write, he felt, ought to be sacred ; and yet he trusted to her sweet, pure nature so implicitly, that he knew she would only commend herself even to his mother's critical eyes by anything she would write to him.

But alas, for poor Carita ! She had acted very unwisely in not following her lover's injunctions more exactly. Philip had bade her give her letter to Mr. Heath, who was to enclose and re-address it. Instead of doing this, she had, as I said before, taken special pride in addressing and posting her first love-letter herself ; and as she put "Philip Emerson" on the cover, without the important addition of the word "junior," it fell into the unsympathetic hands of Philip Emerson, senior,—for father and son had the same Christian name.

Mr. Emerson happened to be alone in the library when the mail bag came in the morning Carita's letter arrived.

"Whose scrawling, womanish handwriting is this ?" he said to himself. "San Juan the postmark." Then tearing it open and seeing "My own dear Phil," and at the end, "Your loving Carita——" "Some entanglement Philip has got into out yonder," he



“ ‘On business, I suppose?’ said his father, drily.”—*Page 207.*

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muttered ; and hearing Philip's footsteps in the hall, he crushed the letter into his pocket.

"Nothing for me?" said poor Phil, as he glanced at the covers of the letters.

"Did you expect anything special?" asked his father, somewhat more sternly, Phil thought, than the occasion demanded.

"Yes ; it is one of the American mail days, and I expected a letter from Colorado."

"On business, I suppose?" said his father, drily.

"No ; from a friend, sir," answered the young man, nettled at his father's tone, and disappointed as well.

He had promised his mother, against his convictions and inclination, not to write to Carita until he had Carita's promised letter. Then Mrs. Emerson said she would represent the facts of the case as favourably as she could to his father, and Philip would be able to write more definitely, and also to give kindly messages from his people to his betrothed.

This was the way the mother put it to him, and she was in very weak health still, and must not—the doctor had told Phil—be agitated or excited for fear of relapse. So the poor fellow felt bound to yield to her wishes in the matter ; and her husband, fearing also to worry and distress her, kept Carita's letter to

himself, and made up his mind that Philip should not return to Colorado if he could prevent it. He fumed much in secret over its contents. The name "Carita" made him angry and suspicious, to begin with. He even feared she might be some coloured girl; and the way in which she told her lover of her engagement at the Temple of Health, as well as the doubts which the poor girl expressed lest Phil's friends should disapprove of his returning to marry her, made Mr. Emerson determined that his son should be prevented from forming what he believed would be an unsuitable and even disreputable connection. A feeling the reverse of sympathy filled his mind, each mail morning, as he noticed the deepening disappointment on his son's face. He determined next to make him settle down at home, and to offer him every inducement and facility towards marrying into one of the county families in the neighbourhood of Dunwood, his own property in Cheshire.

Mrs. Emerson, on her side, implored Philip to be patient a little longer. A week later he received a letter from Mr. Heath, saying that he enclosed none from Carita, as she said she was posting one herself at San Juan. "She will have told you, poor girl, of the break up at Elk Ranch, and of the engagement

she thought fit to make. We did not like or approve of it, but she would not be dissuaded from it. They are not likely to be up here again, I fancy, as Warner writes me that he has decided to settle down in San Francisco."

Philip did not appear at the breakfast-table the morning he received this letter. He had his horse saddled, left a message for his mother, to say that he would not be back until late in the day, and then rode off at a mad pace to some woods about five miles away, where he fastened his horse to a tree, as he used to do in the Colorado mountains when he went to see Carita.

He flung himself on the turf and gave way to the passion that filled him. So she was false to him, after all; for the word "engaged" only suggested one idea to the morbid mind which had been growing in him from not hearing from her, and now he was filled with jealousy and distrust.

And to whom could she have become engaged? He thought of the very few men's names he had ever heard mentioned at Elk Ranch or Pepperbox Flat, but they suggested no likely lover or husband for Carita. Then he remembered Mrs. Bombasin, who had arrived just before he left. It was some low

fellow from Chicago she had brought about the place, most probably. Phil ground his teeth and clenched his hands as he imagined the innocent girl he loved corrupted, and perhaps deceived, by some idle scamp.

By-and-by a fit of tenderness came over him; he seemed to see her trustful, loving eyes looking with reproach at him, and to feel her clinging fingers wound in his. The strong man actually began to sob, and hot tears, the first he had shed in his manhood, sprang into his eyes. Just then his horse began to neigh, impatient of its tether and thinking of its mid-day meal. This roused Phil, so that he started to his feet, shook himself, and, mounting again, rode to a village inn a mile distant, where he gave his horse up to the ostler and went into the house.

“What will you take, sir?” asked the landlady.

He had not meant to take anything. Since the day he first met Carita and Joy Heath he had taken no strong drink. He had before associated with a set of men whom since that time he had shunned; and, finding himself better in health, instead of worse, for his abstinence, he had continued to abstain, in spite of his father’s remonstrances and his brother’s sneering objections.

To-day, at the woman’s words, “What will you

take, sir?" the old man within tempted him fiercely. He would drink; yes, drink, and forget his love and Carita's falseness. So he called for brandy, and threw himself into an easy chair within the inn parlour.

His family were well known in this village. Before Mrs. Pratt, the landlady, came in with the brandy, Phil heard the wheels of a passing carriage and the sounds of a pair of trotting horses, whilst a loud, rough voice at the bar called out to some one outside, "Them's Squire Emerson's new horses."

Philip jumped up and went to the window. His mother was driving past, propped up with pillows; she was alone, and her face, he saw, looked anxious and sad.

"Just as I was going to make a beast of myself," he muttered; and he threw down half a crown and went out of the house, leaving the spirits untouched.

He stood outside looking after the carriage, whilst Mrs. Pratt wondered what had come to him.

"Summat wrong's up at Dunwood, I doubt," said the man drinking at the bar. "Squire Emerson's missis just drove by, and young mester there, standing donderin' loike i' the middle o' the road. Summat wrong's agate, I tell ye."

When his horse had had its feed, Philip rode off into the woods again. There he stayed thinking, until it was time to go home, if he intended to dine that evening; and he began now to feel somewhat hungry. He could not eat much, however, when he did sit down; and his pale, set face told his mother that he was out of sorts and unhappy.

"Tell me all about it, my boy," she begged, when he led her, as he always did, from the dining-room into her own little sanctum.

Placing her in her easy chair, Phil lay down on the rug at her feet, and the tender-hearted mother drew her son's head towards her, until it rested on her knee, as it had so often done when he knew little of any love save her own.

"Tell me all about it, Phil, darling," she said again, gently.

"It's all up, mother; I had a letter to-day from Colorado."

"From her, Phil?"

"No; from our friend Heath. No, she did not write to me," he added, bitterly; "she has thrown me over for some one else, mother. Her people have left the place where I knew them, and gone I don't know where. Don't ask me anything more, mother. I

know no more, and I never wish to hear of them again."

She said nothing, though her heart ached for her boy's grief and disappointment. For some time she was uneasy about him, seeing him restless and moody. On the whole, however, she thought it was well the affair had ended. The thought of this Mexican girl had not been agreeable to her; and now that Carita had, as she believed, proved unfaithful to Philip, she felt that her doubts and fears about the connection were justified. The girl would have been no fit wife for her Philip. By-and-by he would see this himself, and be glad that he had escaped from an entanglement. She would then help him to choose some one more suitable—one of those sweet girls at Lea, perhaps; they should be invited over to stay a few days at Dunwood as soon as possible.

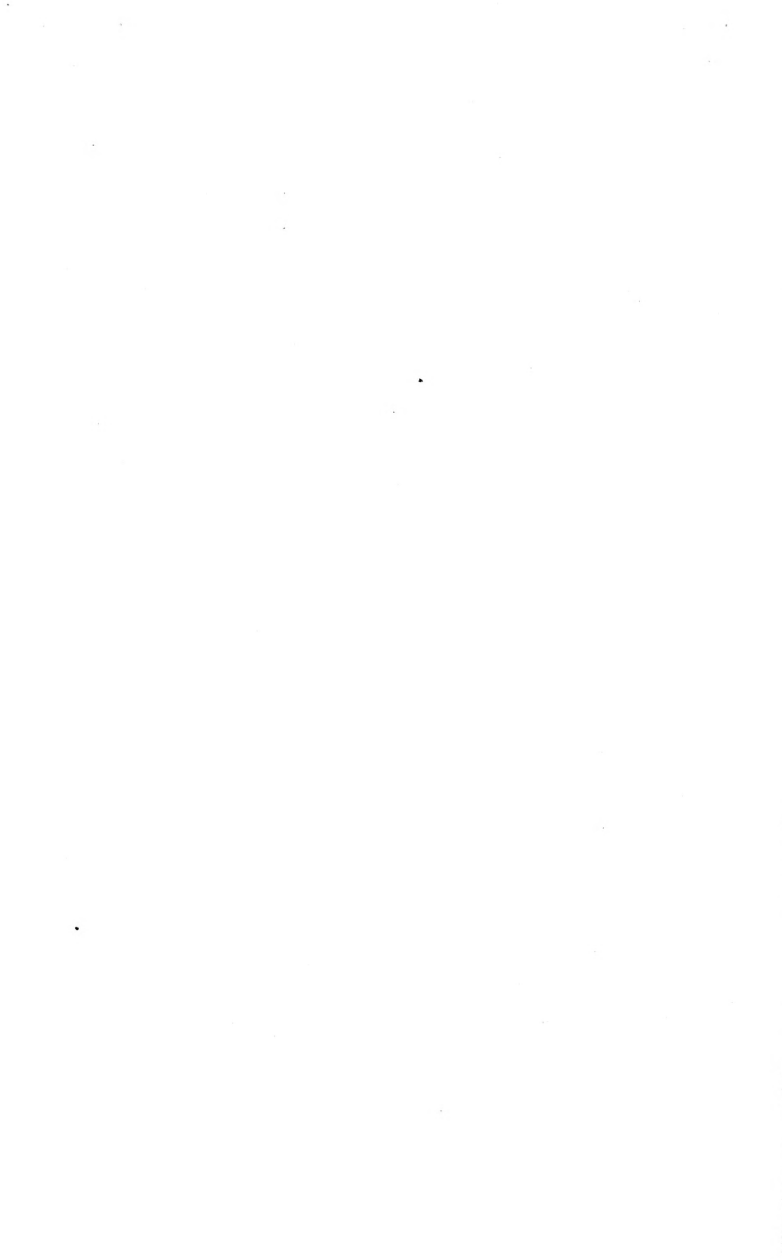
When Philip answered Mr. Heath's letter, he made no allusion whatever to Carita; nor did he say whether he intended to return to Colorado at the end of three months, as he had proposed doing when he left for England. His letter was dry and short, vexing Joy and her mother much. This was why, in writing to her friend, Joy made no mention of him.

The fact was, he had not yet made up his mind.

When his father asked him what his ideas as to the future were, the sarcastic tone in which the question was put made him angry—unreasonably so ; and he replied he had none at all at present ; and as both father and mother knew what was the matter with him, although neither spoke to the other of what was uppermost in their minds, they left him at liberty to indulge his morbid and bitter fancies, in the hope that time and absence would work a cure.

CHAPTER XV.

WITHIN THE GATES.



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WITHIN THE GATES.

"Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood,
Stand drest in living green."

"**I** FEEL so well to-day, Carita," said Edward Arundel, one morning, late in September ; "and I have set my heart on a ride with you,—if not right through the Garden of the Gods, at any rate up to the gates thereof. What do you say, will you ride with me ?"

"In the ambulance ?"

"The ambulance ? No, indeed ! ' Ride,' I said, not ' drive ;' we English make a distinction there ; you Americans say ' ride' for driving, riding, or rowing indiscriminately. No, I mean to ride to-day, so be kind and get ready as soon as you can ; the day is perfect, there is no wind to hurt my poor old breathing pipes."

"I have a great deal to do in the house this morning," objected Carita.

"I'll make that all right with Mrs. Johnson and Bridget ; be kind and come."

"I don't think horseback exercise is good for you, Edward. Let us take the buggy, if you do not like the ambulance."

"Stuff and nonsense, O wise young woman ! I mean to ride, whether you go with me or not."

"Go with him, Carrie," said Mrs. Johnson ; "I don't suppose it will hurt him if you ride gently ; and you will perhaps be a check on him, so that he will ride more quietly," she added, when the young man's back was turned.

He had one of those turns so common to consumptive patients, which often prove fatally deceptive to themselves, as well as to those who love them : the momentarily brighter flickering of a flame which will soon be extinguished.

Away the pair rode, starting side by side at a gentle pace, Carita looking so attractive in her simple riding dress, on Mrs. Johnson's well-kept little broncho, that Miss Smart and Miss Flint, two angular rich young women, come from the East to "flirt round out West," as their acquaintances said, became quite

spiteful in their comments as they stood with two of the gentlemen boarders on the veranda, in the shade of the morning glories, which crept and flowered luxuriantly up the trellis-work.

Soon the horses began to "lope," as they call the delightful ambling canter common to half-Mexican horses; the warm colour came into Carita's pale cheeks, and her dark eyes shone like stars. Her companion noted the change, and a sudden longing to have her always at his side—a feeling as though her constant nearness would bring or communicate electricity, and with it help and gladness again—came over him, making him pull in rein; and, as the horses paced once more slowly over the soft turf, he became absorbed in this new idea.

Why should he not try to make this girl love him? He knew nothing of her family, but she was sweet and good herself, he was sure of that. And she was lonely, too, he saw. Three months she had been at the Temple, and very few letters had been received by her; he had noted that fact also. His mother was dead; and his father, a clergyman in Cheshire, and a kind, large-hearted man, would, he knew, take kindly to so good a wife as Carita would make. He felt very well to-day. She was

not strong, but with care and a happy, easy life, such as he could give her in England, she would be stronger. His father was coming to see him next month ; then, if Carita would listen to him, all might be settled.

The girl beside him little guessed what was passing through the mind of her friend. Her own absorbing love made her entirely unsuspecting that she might waken love in any of the men round her. When a woman loves, the instinct which warns her of another love fails her most.

"Why are you so quiet?" she asked, presently. "You are tired ; we must not lope any more. Your face is quite white," she added, as he turned to look at her more intently, wondering whether he should give her any idea of what was in his thoughts.

"Would you like to go to England, Carita?" he said, without noticing her words.

To England, where Phil was! The idea brought such a flush of colour into her face ; the cheeks were rosy before with exercise, but now, brow, neck, and ears burned. She could not answer, and poor Edward misreading the signs of feeling, a new hope came into his heart ; he would say more, he thought, when they reached the Garden of the Gods, where they

would rest awhile, instead of turning back at the gates, as Mrs. Johnson had advised.

Alas! by the time the gates were reached, the sky above them was suddenly overcast. The mountains in front of them had prevented their noticing some black clouds that now broke in a sudden, tremendous shower of great hailstones, some of them as large as a small egg.

Such sudden storms come sometimes in those parts at the time of the equinox, and their strength and fury are tremendous while the gale lasts. The two sheltered behind a wall of rock. An hour passed, and Edward Arundel began to shiver in the damp shadow. Carita, too, feared that she felt symptoms of her old foe, rheumatism.

How unfortunate they were! If only they had been in the ambulance, or even the little buggy, they could have covered themselves with the bear-skins always spread over the seats.

There was no help for it. When the hail had stopped, with a sad, rueful look into the Garden of the Gods, they gave rein to the horses, who were glad to turn homewards, and away they rode, hardly exchanging a word until they reached the Temple.

"No earthly paradise with nectar and ambrosia,

'drink divine,' for me, Carita," said the young man, sadly, as, tired, wet, and exhausted though he was, he helped her down from the saddle.

She little knew how much meaning lay in his words; but her anxiety lest he had taken fresh cold and might have a severe relapse, made her more tender even than usual in the little offices she was wont to perform for him, when he came in from his drives or rides.

The following morning he was too ill to rise at all. Dr. Starkwetter was sent for, and he confirmed all Carita's fears. "It is a case of acute pneumonia," he said, gravely, going into Mrs. Johnson's private sitting-room. "Did I not hear that the young man's father was coming soon? If he is not better this evening, you should send a cablegram to tell him there is no time to lose if he would see his son alive."

Carita could hardly be induced to leave the sick-room, until Mrs. Johnson persuaded her that it was better for the sufferer to have an older nurse, at any rate part of the time. She sat beside his bed one evening, his thin wasted hand in hers, and his large dark-blue eyes gazing full into her own.

"I had such a heavenly dream this afternoon,

Carrie," he said. "I thought I was riding swiftly and easily over yonder to the Garden, into which I wanted to take you. The air was soft and sweet, and I seemed to be hastening on to find 'the tree whose leaves are for the healing of the nations.' I read those two chapters at the end of the Bible to my mother when she was dying, and I had been thinking of them before I fell asleep."

He stopped exhausted ; then after a little, seeing the tears fall fast from Carita's pale face,—

"Don't cry, dear ; don't cry ! Do you know, I thought that day we rode together, that I was going to get better ; and that if I did I could perhaps have made you love me, and so have made life brighter for both of us. Don't turn away from me, dear," he added, sadly, noting a little movement she made on hearing his last words ; "my love cannot harm any one now."

Carita replaced her hand in his, and laying her head down wearily on his pillow, told him he must not talk any more, it would hurt him.

They remained quiet for a little while ; the sun, setting in a glory of crimson and gold, sent long, slanting rays into the room, and the eyes of the young man followed them out westward.

"At eventide there shall be light," he murmured. "Will you kiss me, Carita; then I will go to sleep again."

It was to the girl as though a solemn, holy presence filled the room. She stood gazing at him a moment, and bending over him she kissed the wan, wistful lips, tenderly, lovingly, once; then again, saying, "This is for your sister, Edward."

The poor fellow smiled faintly, "And father," he whispered. So they two stood beside Jordan.

Then he lay back, turning his face over towards where Carita sat; and when Mrs. Johnson came into the room an hour later, she found he had passed through the gates in gentle slumber, whilst Carita, worn out with anxiety and watchings, lay with her head against his pillow, fast asleep.



““ Oh, I will have the rest later on,’ said he.”—Page 224.

CHAPTER XVI.
A NEW FRIEND.



CHAPTER XVI.

A NEW FRIEND.

DR. STARKWETTER said the end had come even sooner than he expected. "It was so often in these cases," he added, and it was merciful when it happened ; phlegm rising in the throat during sleep was the immediate cause. Had he lived longer it would have only been to suffer more. For himself it was far better, but it was sad for the poor father, who, travelling as rapidly as it was possible to do, could only arrive at the Springs in time to commit all that was left of his son to the grave.

He found Carita, about whom Edward had spoken much in his letters home, and towards whom his bereaved heart now turned in grateful kindness, ill in bed with a fever caused by weakness and sorrow.

He helped Mrs. Johnson to nurse and watch by the bedside of the girl who had shed some brightness

over the last months of his son's life ; and by the time Carita had got better—as, thanks to Dr. Starkwetter's skill, she did after three weeks had passed away, and Mr. Arundel was obliged to return to his parish duties—he had grown so fond of her that he meditated taking her to England with him to be a companion to his one motherless daughter.

“I don't suppose her friends will make any objection,” said Mrs. Johnson, to whom he communicated his idea. “I've come to love the poor child very much myself, but I fear I must get some one a little stronger to help me here next summer. I should be glad to think she had a happy home and some one to care for her. It's most time her folks were passing through this way again ; they spoke of fetching her away in October, and to-morrow will be the first of November.”

As Carita got better, it was towards Stephen Warner that her thoughts turned most longingly, for she had never doubted his love and care for her, and felt sure that, as soon as he returned from those far-away islands and missed her, he would come and take her home to himself again. And it was towards this parental love, strong and tender but less passionate, more restful and less agitating and exacting, that

her heart turned as she lay resting in the long bamboo chair, day after day, out on the veranda. What would father say if his little daughter, as he used to call her, were to die before he got home? Ah, no! she must try to get better for his sake and the boys'.

Stephen Warner was just then only within a few days' journey of Colorado Springs, getting home sooner than he expected. On landing in San Francisco, he had found a letter from Eleanor awaiting him at his friend's office. It was dated from Denver, and in it his wife told him that the loneliness of Elk Ranch had been too much for her, so she had joined an old friend here. There was not one word about Carita in the letter, which annoyed him, as all the others were mentioned.

When he reached the boarding-house from which it was dated, and learned where she was, Tom also telling him how ill she had been in the beginning of the year, he was very angry, and, refusing to listen to his wife's excuses and explanations, he hurried on to Colorado Springs at once, telling Eleanor she could follow with the boys as soon as they could get ready. He took an intense dislike to Eleanor's friend, the lively widow, and would not be induced to talk civilly to her.

Eleanor felt deeply injured, and the thought that her husband should leave her at once, to go in search of Carita, was most humiliating to her feelings as a wife. She could not bear to encounter the looks and comments of the other boarders in the house, so she packed up as quickly as possible, and passing Manitou dépôt without sending any message to Stephen, went straight on up to the mountains to sulk there in quiet.

It was by far the best thing she could do, and so Stephen thought, when he got an affectionate scrawl from his boy Tom, posted in San Juan. Yet he grieved at not finding more sympathy in the mother of his children, and his generous heart led him to hope that a more genial, sociable life in San Francisco would bring about a better state of things between them.

* * * * *

I must leave you to picture to yourselves Carita's joy when Stephen arrived at the Temple of Health.

The same evening, after she had gone to rest, Mr. Arundel—who was leaving in the course of a few days—Dr. Starkwetter, and Stephen sat smoking together on the veranda, and Carita was the subject of a long conversation.

To the clergyman's propositions to take his adopted daughter home with him to England, Stephen replied that nothing would persuade him to give her up to any one ; though it gratified him to find how much she was appreciated.

"Is there anything radically wrong with her constitution, doctor?" he asked.

"Nothing of any importance. She has had rheumatic fever, she tells me, and that usually leaves some delicateness behind ; but with care she will live as long and be as strong as most of us. I should like to know her history. I have not liked to ask her to tell me much, as, to speak candidly, I do not think she has been very happy, although every one can see how glad she is to see you again. But she is not your daughter ; Mrs. Johnson told me that. I should have known it, anyhow, for there is not the slightest resemblance between you. Her name is a Spanish one ; and from her face I can tell there is Mexican blood in her veins. And yet she is not of the pure, unmixed breed."

"Do you think not? As far as I know, she is of good pure Mexican descent. Refill your pipe, doctor, and I will give you her story."

"I have watched our young friend very closely,"

said the doctor, doing as he was bid. "She interested me from the first. You know I have lived over twenty years in California, and have been much in Mexico, and I feel sure that Carita is only Mexican on one side—the mother's, probably, for I believe rather in the notion that the girls in a family take after the father mostly, and the boys after the mother."

"Her face is purely Southern in type, however."

"So it is, but the hands and feet are not; and her character is not what you look for in a Mexican woman. No, I should feel certain that her father was either American or English."

"Well, listen to my story."

And Stephen Warner told how he first found the poor babe hanging over the low abode hut; and afterwards of the dying Mexican woman's confession, and the registry of Candalaria's adoption by Judge Lynchem.

Here Dr. Starkwetter interrupted him with an exclamation.

"How extraordinary! how very extraordinary! Unless I am very much mistaken, I was at the death-bed of that villain who married a Mexican lady, and forsook her under pretence of seeking help for her.

In what year did you say the child was born? and in what settlement?"

Stephen told him this.

"The very date and place! I had not been long out in California. One night a priest I knew well, a good, devoted man, came to my tent—I was camping out up the Sacramento River—and begged me to come with him to the help of a poor fellow who had been shot in a fray with some roughs. I could be of no use to the man, and I told him he had better look to his soul, for his hours were numbered. So I left him with the priest. As a last confession is, of course, sacred, I never heard the whole of his story; but one part of it Father Francis did tell me, as he said it might prove of importance to the living some day.

"The man was an Englishman—one who had come out in the days of the first gold fever, yonder. He had bad luck in his gold seeking; and when war broke out in Mexico, he went and enlisted there to try his fortune that way. Falling in with another Englishman, but a man, unlike himself, of good family, who had become an officer in the Mexican army, he made himself useful to him, and won his confidence. This man's name, he said, was Grierson; but whether it was his real name or an assumed one,

he did not know. He was a good, fine fellow, but had had some heavy trouble which had made him give up his country and friends, and seek change and excitement in war under a foreign flag. There were several other Europeans engaged as officers in this war.

"A Mexican general, a friend of Grierson's, was shot, and Grierson married this friend's only daughter. A little later Grierson, too, fell, and in dying bade his faithless follower take charge of his wife, and get her away to a place of safety. He tried to tell the man more and to give him more definite instructions, but death prevented this.

"Then the man told how he got the poor lady away North, and married her, and how he forsook her, leaving her in a hut at Fort Marshall, and taking most of her money away with him.

"Without doubt," said Dr. Starkwetter, in conclusion, "the baby born there was the child of this Englishman Grierson, but this is probably all you will ever know. The party her father and grandfather fought with lost everything in that war, and Grierson was probably not the Englishman's real name. But now, tell me—has the poor child any love troubles?"



"The sight of Stephen was better than all Dr. Starkwetter's tonics."—Page 255.

"None that I know of."

"Try to find out if it be so. I believe that's what is chiefly the matter. An old doctor like me could tell that without having seen that toy in the shape of a heart which she has tied round her neck. I saw it when I sounded her, when she was first took ill."

"Oh, that was the old woman's, the only thing she had to restore to her. And, by the bye, the second letter engraved on it is 'G,' which would stand for Grierson, and so confirm your man's story."

"Well, find out what is troubling the child's own heart, Mr. Warner ; that's of more importance just now than to know who her grandfathers were, especially as you say you do not want to part with her."

The sight of Stephen was better to the invalid than all Dr. Starkwetter's tonics and Mrs. Johnson's jellies, good though these were ; and one morning, the day after Arundel left for his Cheshire home, and the day before Carita was to start with Stephen for the San Juan and Elk Ranch, he told her the doctor's story, and afterwards drew from her the story of her love. It enraged him to hear how this man, whom he had never seen, should have won the heart of his child—for as such he always considered Carita—only to make light of it and to forsake her.

He set his teeth, and then went off to smoke out his wrath a little before he could talk quietly with her as to the future which lay before her, and which must be always in his home.

What he had told her of her father had done her sore heart good. It soothed and comforted her to know that she came, at least on one side, from the same Saxon race as did Stephen and the boys. And in time she trusted God, and prayed that He would strengthen her weak heart, and help her to give up what was most precious in it, if such was His will. Her pain was, she tried to remember, small compared with what her poor mother must have endured.

Still, in all her prayers, Phil's name was mentioned, so there was not much chance of her love being forgotten.

CHAPTER XVII.

“TAKE JOY HOME.”

CHAPTER XVII.

"TAKE JOY HOME."

"Take Joy home.

Then will she come and oft will sing to thee

When thou art working in the furrows."

Jean Ingelow.

IT is the end of April, and the time has come for the bursting of buds long closed and folded up within themselves by reason of the snows and frosts of winter, and for the singing of birds as they twitter joyfully, and busily flit from bough to bough, choosing cosy, pleasant places wherein to build their warm little nests.

Spring is here, a little late in these high latitudes, but how welcome to Carita as she trips about feeding the "bosses," as they call the young cattle out West, counting the chickens, racing with Ronnie, and singing hymns out of the fulness of her glad heart down on Pepperbox Flat on Sunday evenings.

Spring has come, and Philip is coming! What

more could Carita wish for? Only to see the father a little happier and Mrs. Warner sweeter and brighter. There is some hope even of that now, for after one more harvest on Elk Ranch they are to leave the lonely mountains and to go to a city home, more to Eleanor's liking. After all, as some one said long ago, cats will never learn to burrow in the ground, nor rabbits to run up trees.

* * * * *

I must go back a little and tell you how it was that Philip is coming home to the mountains and to Carita.

He had idled, irresolutely, through two more months at home, and was just beginning to rouse himself and to take his part with more principle and strength in the duties of life, when he saw in a Liverpool paper the notice of Edward Arundel's death at Colorado Springs. His father had only a slight acquaintance with Mr. Arundel, and he had not heard of the invalid son's going to Colorado.

Philip had a friend living in Mr. Arundel's parish, so he rode over at once to see him. All associated with Colorado had naturally a strong interest for him. His friend, George Newton, told him that the clergyman would not be back for three weeks longer.

At the end of that time Philip rode over again ; he

had vague hopes that, as the Warners were so well known in their State, and Manitou was only half a day's journey from San Juan, he might possibly gather some scraps of information about them.

His friend Newton called with him at the vicarage. Imagine his feelings when Mr. Arundel, in speaking of his son, mentioned Carita, who had been so kind a nurse to him.

"I knew a young lady of that name," said Philip, with as much self-control as he could muster. "Do you know what brought her to the Springs?"

"Her story is rather a singular one," replied Mr. Arundel. Then he told the two young men more about her, little suspecting what gladness all his words were bringing into the heart of one of his listeners.

Philip said nothing about his position with regard to Carita then. After a little more talk about poor Edward, the friends left; but over their pipes the whole story was told to George Newton, who undertook to get Mr. Arundel to call on Mrs. Emerson as soon as it could well be arranged.

The clergyman was deeply interested when he heard Philip's account of his engagement. The result of his visit was that Mrs. Emerson's scruples and objections were all removed; and her husband—who was

feeling twinges of remorse for having burned, not only that first letter, but also two later ones, all addressed in the same way, and easily intercepted by him, as he took care always to have the bag brought first to himself—gave his consent to Philip's returning to the West, and marrying Carita—"that is, if you find she is true to you," he added, grimly. He did not confess to burning her letters until some time later, when a regular correspondence had been established between the two lovers.

Philip remained in England during the winter to gratify his mother, who was still in delicate health, and who pleaded that she had seen so little of him for some years.

* * * * *

"How strange it was that Edward Arundel should have come from so near your home, Phil!" said Carita one day, as they sat once more under the aspens in Silverdale.

"Not very, dearest ; it was through hearing of this wonderful climate from the Newtons, our friends in Gratton, that Mr. Arundel sent the poor fellow to Colorado Springs, unfortunately too late to be of any service to him. I had not heard of his going, as the Newtons had been abroad, and only just returned

when I rode over that day to see George. By the way, George is coming out here next month, in time to be my groomsman, Carrie. He and Joyce Heath will make a very nice pair, don't you think so?"

Philip and Carita were married in the leafy month of June, by her true friend, Mr. Grahame. She looked very lovely in a dress made by Mrs. Carey's daughters, under the superintendence of the clergyman's wife, with some beautiful ornaments—Mrs. Emerson's wedding gift. Stephen gave away the bride, although he had so lately said he would never part with her to any one. Tom, Alick, and Ronnie were in high feather. They were glad to think there would be a chance of coming to visit Carrie in her Colorado home sometime, the idea of a city life being not so welcome to them as to their mother. Even Mrs. Warner looked smiling and happy. To tell the truth, she was a little glad to see Carita disposed of.

* * * * *

Philip's wedding gift was one which delighted Carita inexpressibly. It was Elk Ranch itself, which Mr. Warner was glad enough to sell to him. So the newly married pair were near to the Heaths, a great thing for the young wife, who valued Mrs. Heath's friendship and that of Joyce so highly. George Newton

seemed in no hurry to return to Cheshire ; Pepper-box Flat had a strong attraction for him.

One day little Dorothy asked him to write his name in her birthday book, which was one of those with verses from different poets.

“Tell me your birthday, and I will find the place,” said Dorothy.

George gave her the date.

“Why, how funny !” cried the child.

“Read up, Dolly,” said Ben ; “what’s his verse ?”

And Dolly read solemnly Jean Ingelow’s lines, whilst her sister became rosy red and did not know where to look.

“Take Joy home, and make thou room in thy great heart for her.”

“Here, Dolly, let me write my name,” interrupted George.

“But I want to read you the rest.”

“Oh, I will have the rest later on,” said he ; “that is, if Joy will let me,” he added, turning so that only Joyce could hear his last words. Before the winter set in, he took Joy home to England with him, but they returned together the following spring ; and whilst George broke up the land of his mountain farm, Joy came and sang as he worked amongst the furrows.

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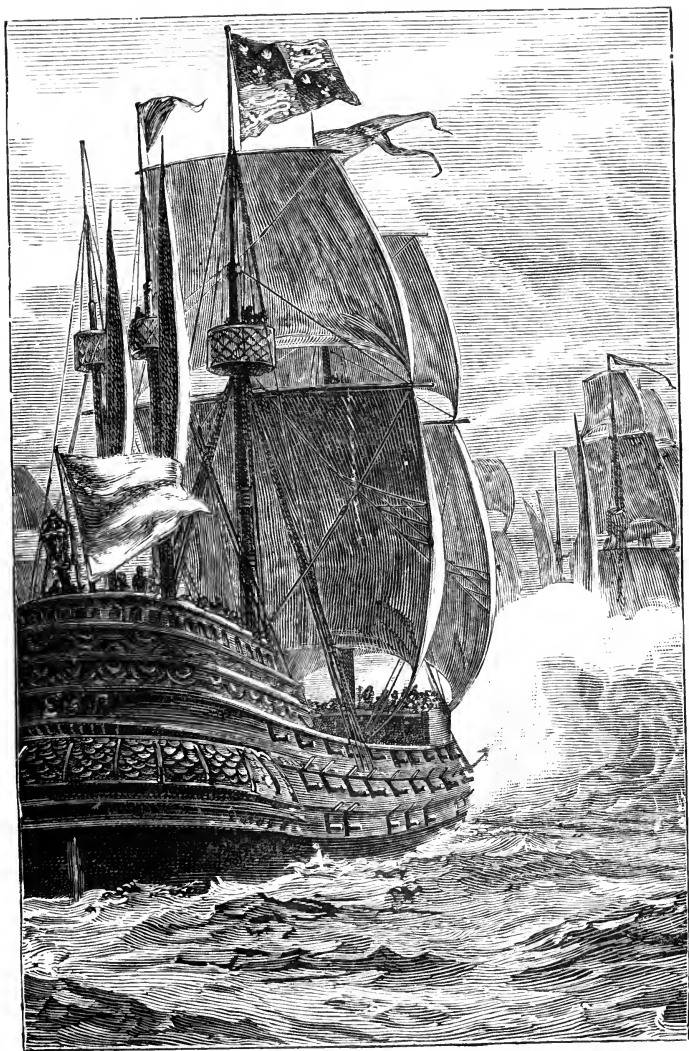
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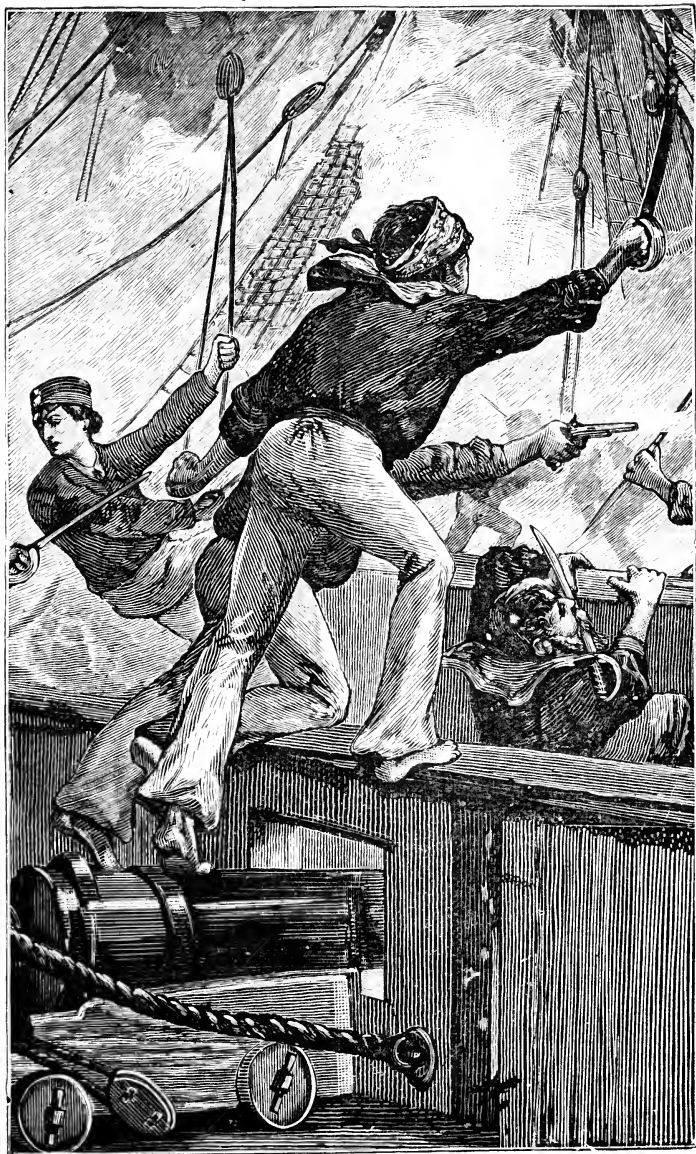
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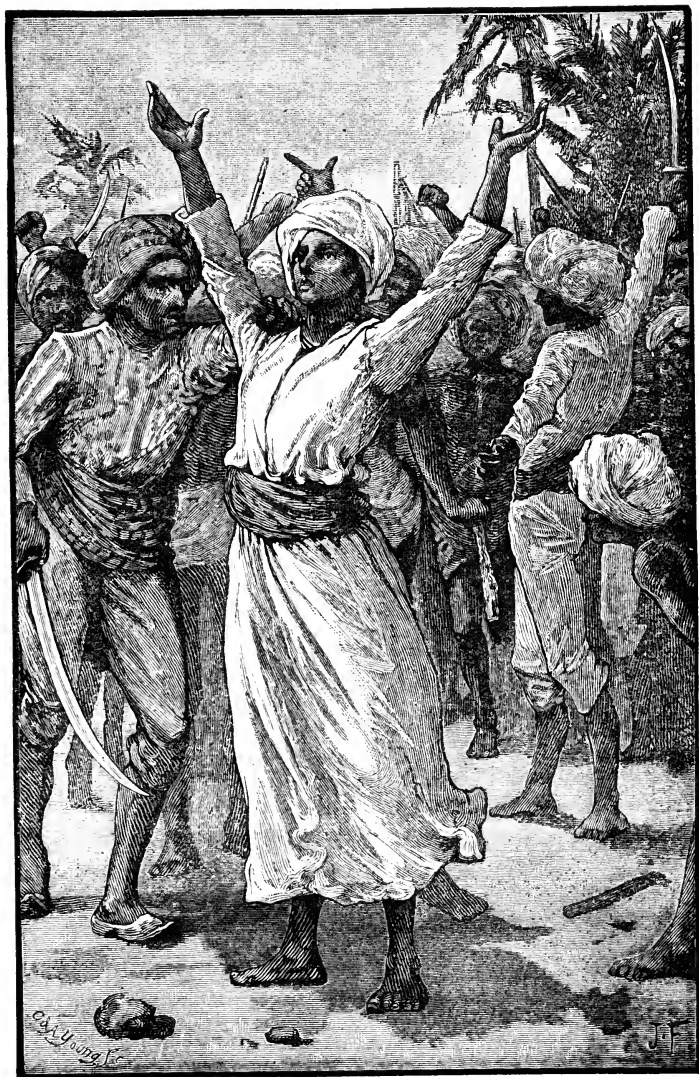
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